The Vaisnava Sects
The Saiva Sects
Mother Worship

3700

BY

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MOTHER WORSHIP

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

It is a great pleasure to be able to offer before the English knowing public three books by Swami Tattwananda in one volume. They are 'The Vaisnava sects' 'The Saiva sects' and 'The Mother worship'. They seek to provide the interested readers with the necessary information on religion. The author has endeavoured in these valuable works to give in detail, the origin, nature, literature, philosophy, the customs and manners of different sects, the growth of symbolism in ancient times and the significance of Sakti worship or the Motherhood of God. I hope the books containing the religious history and sociology of India will have a greater appeal to the modern readers who may get therein some food for thought and meditation and may wish to satisfy their spiritual quest by pouring over the glorious culture of this vast country.

I take this opportunity in expressing my sincere gratitude to Sri V.A. Thiagarajan M. A. Retired Professor of English, Mysore

University whose assistance in the matter of editing and proof correction expedited the publication of this volume, But for him it would have been very difficult for me to bring out the books.

Our labour will be justified if the books serve the purpose of fulfilling the need throughout the English knowing world.

I regret to state that despite great care some mistakes in printing have crept in for which a list of errata is added at the end of each book.

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INTRODUCTION.

In this book, Swami Tattwannda has, for the first time, collected all the available materials about the Vaisnava sects of India. A widely travelled Sadhu, he has come into contact with the different Vaisnava sects that are scattered all over India. Most educated men of India and quite a few perhaps among the European scholars are familiar with the five main sects of the Vaisnavas of India, namely, the followers of Ramanuja, Madhwachary, Vallabhacharya, Nimbark and Sri Chaitanya. But few are aware of the manifold divisions and subdivisions into which the Vaisnava order has expressed itself.

Swami Tattwanada has investigated at least ninety sects big and small, with their secret affiliations to one or other of the five main branches of the Vasnava order. This pioneer work is, therefore, of great value from the point of view of religious history as well as from the point of view of sociology of India.

Sd/- G. KAR. M. A., P.H. D. (CALCUTTA)

THE VAISNAVA SECTS OF INDIA.

It is very difficult to ascertain exactly the period when the Bhakti cult and the worship of Vishnu or Krishna became prevalent in India. Some savants hold that the idea of Bhakti predominent among the Vaisnavas was borrowed either from Christianity or from Islam ; and Krishna, the chosen deity of the sect, was an adaptation. The influence of Christianity or of Islam on Vaisnavism based more on conjectures than on history, cannot be proved. The origin of Bhakti in India, the deification and worship of Vasudeva and his identification with Krishna are all pre-Christian or pre-Islamic conceptions. The worship of Vishnu, Narayana, Vasudeva and Krishna are prevalent throughout India, in Nepal in the north, Bengal in the east, Kathiawar in the west and also in the south where the Vaisnava tradition has been maintained specially by the devotional songs of the Alwars (saints).

If we study with scrutiny the ancient scripture of this country we find a trace of His worship here and there. In an ancient scripture the definition of the word is given in a beautiful manner. According to this definition a man who always prays to Vishnu, knows Him to be the Lord of the Universe, worships none but Vishnu, to whom Vishnu is the desired deity of worship, is known in the world to be a Vaisnava. The mention of this word occurs in the Rik Veda (1-22-16 and 1-22-20), the earliest religious book and literature of the Hindus. Therein He is represented as the most powerful Being invoked in prayer for the protection of the universe. He is the universal Conscious Being at whose lotus feet the universe is lying. He is endowed with unlimited power. He is the protector, the preserver, the fountain head of all power, and is invincible everywhere.

The trace of the worship of Vishnu is found in some places in the Vedas consisting of Rik, Sam, Yajur and Atharva. At some places He is described as the primal Being, the foremost and the best of all beings. The Satapat Brahmana (14-1-1-15) supports this view. Mention of this word is made in some places of the Upanishads (e.g. Kaivalya 1-8 and Brahma 1-17) where He is described as God, and high qualities are attributed to Him.

Vishnu worship was prevalent from very ancient times. According to some during the Vedic period it was known as Sattwata Vidhi prevalent among the Pancharatra sect of the Vaisnavas specially. The seven Rishis such as Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulasta, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasistha who are known as Chitra Shikandis are said to be the founders of this system. This is corroborated by the Mahabharata, Santiparva verse 335 (28-29). It is otherwise known as Bhagavat Dharma. (c/o, Srimat Bhagavat, 6th. Skanda, Chapter 3, verses 20-21.)

The Pancharatra Sect.

The Bhagavat Dharma or Sattwata Vidhi which was prevalent from very ancient times became, in course of time, known as the Pancharatra system. The explanatory notes on the Brahma Sutra given by Bodhayana, Guhadeva and Dramiracharya are in support of this system of Philosophy. By the 8th. century though Sankaracharya admitted greatly the devotional aspect of their tenet and the utility of the process of their spiritual practice for the realisation of the desired deity he refuted their philosophy with very strong arguments based on the authority of the Vedas and Upanishads. According to him the doctrine based on the authority of the Bhagavat whose validity is subject to question, unlike the Vedas and the Upanishads, cannot stand the test of scrutiny and is not consistent with reason throughout. Afterwards during the 11th. century A.D. Ramanujacharya, a staunch follower of Vaisnavism devoted his whole hearted energy to the establishment of this Pancharatra system of Vaisnavism by refuting the philosophy of Sankaracharya.

Vaisnava sects of the mediaeval age.

The old order changes and yields place to the new. This is the law of life. In the course of time, the customs, conventions, rules and regulations of society, the process of Upasana (prayer), sacrifice etc. which were prevalent in their society from very ancient times were found unsuitable, and the necessity to change them according to time and circumstances was deeply felt by them to suit the environments and tastes. As a result of this the Vaisnava sect became divided under several groups. We find mention of such sections in Chapter six of the 'Sankara Digvijaya' written by Ananda giri, a disciple of Sankara. They are (a) Bhakta, (b) Bhagavat, (c) Vaisnava (d) Pancharatra (e) Vaikhanas and (f) Karmahina. There are six subsections of the Vaisnava sects classified according to the preference given to knowledge by some and to action by others.

(a) BHAKTA :—

According to this sect Vasudeva is the Supreme Bing. He is all knowing and is the protector of the universe. There is nothing which is not within the reach of His knowledge. He is the cause of all deities, inflicts punishment on the wicked, and gives protection to the virtuous. In order to minimise the burden of the world He incarnates Himself as Ram or Krishna according to the needs of the time and circumstances. According to this section of the Vaisnava sects, the worship of the lotus feet of the Supreme Being is the object of life as this will lead the aspirant to reach the desired goal, and worship is to be done as by the most faithful servant. The visit to the temples, cleaning them, worship of the image of gods with flowers sandal paste, water, scent, offering, prostration, prayer etc. and putting of sandal paste on the forehead with the sectarian mark are some of the duties which help in leading a pure life and thus kindle devotion in the aspirant. The customs and conventions differ according to the liking of the sects some preferring knowledge and others action. Those who prefer knowledge hold that the performance of daily duties as enjoined by the scripture of the Smarthas (supporters of Smriti) are not the most essential proof for guidance; whereas those who prefer action as enjoined by scripture do not like to reap the fruits of those actions but submit them to God.

(b) BHAGAVAT

This religion throws open the path of devotion to all. It is a monotheistic religion of loving communion with God, the Supreme person. It is also called Narayania, Satvata or Ekantika. Its sources are the Mahabharata (Narayania section), Gita, Bhagavat, Puran, Narad sutra and Sandilya sutra. They hold that religion is the elevation of man to God and the descent of God to man. God can neither be attained by the senses nor by argument nor be bought at a price or as a gift. Self exertion or human attainment, physical, intellectual or moral, is not sufficient to acquire fitness for communion with God. He can be attained through whole hearted devotion and love, and He showers His grace upon the pure alone.

According to this sect prayer to God and uttering His name form the main process of worship. They lay very much stress on the uttering of His name which is the essence of their process of worship as by this alone is God to be attained. Kesava (God) is to be realised in the Kaliyuga by the utterance of His name loudly. Though they do not entirely give up actions as enjoined by the scripture of the Smarthas, they are particular in following its injunctions. Singing the name of God loudly, putting on the garland of Tulsi (a kind of plant whose leaves are considered to be sacred by the Vaisnavas) beads on the neck, bearing on the special parts of the limbs the imprints of conch, disc, club, lotus, the four traits of Narayana (God) and making Tilak (sectarian mark) on the fore head with upward trait with sandal paste, are the main duties to which they give very much importance. They admit the necessity of four images specially. They are (i) Para (superme Being) (ii) Vyuha (eg.

Vasudeva, Balarama, Pradyumnan and Anirudha) (iii) Bibhava (e. g. incarnations of Matsya, Kurma etc.) and (iv) Archa (God in images). Ramanuja became the foremost adherent of this sect at a latter period.

(c) VAISNAVA :—

The followers of this sect worship Narayana as the desired deity. Like the Bhagavat sect they bear on the body the imprints of conch, disc, club, and lotus, the characteristic traits of Narayana. They lay special stress on the mantra, 'Om Namo Narayanaya' which means 'salutation to Narayana'.

(d) PANCHARATRA :—

The meaning of this term is uncertain. Some say that the adherents of this cult sacrificed five times a year or observed some vows according to the five seasons. Others hold that the Pancharatra was a sacrifice performed by Purusha or Narayana over a period of five ratris (nights). Whatever may be the meaning it is a cult which has attained much importance. Pancharatra Agama, the scripture of the sect, is regarded as superior to the Vedas. It is considered as Mula Veda, the holy teaching of Narayana to Nara and to a succession of teachers like Sandilya, Prahlad and others.

The Vyuha doctrine finds a prominent place in this system. According to it Vasudeva in His Para aspect is the highest manifestation of Bhakti. He creates from Himself Sankarssua (conditioned spirit) and Prakriti (indiscrete primal matter). From the association of the two arose Pradyumnan and manas (Budhi or intelligence). From the combination of Pradyumnan and manas arose Anirudha and ahankara (consciousness), from the association of Anirudha and ahankara arose the Mahabhutas with their qualities. Vasudeva alone possesses the six ideal gunas or qualities e, g, Jnana, Bala, Virya, Aisurarya, Sakti and Tejas. The Gita does not refer to the Vyuha doctrine but the Mahabharata (Santhi Parva and Visma-parva) does.

According to this sect Narayana is the only desired deity of worship. They have their own scripture called the Pancharatra Agama, the rules and methods of which they follow in their worship. This system is said to be prevalent from very ancient times, even before the date of the Mahabharata. They worship God in image. Like the others they bear on their body

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the imprints of conch, disc, club and lotus, the characteristic traits of Narayana and put on the garland of Tulsi beads. Sandilya Sutra, a very devotional and famous scripture claimed by the Vaisnavas, is the most authentic work of this sect.

(e) VAIKHANAS :—

Vaikhanas, the founder of the sect is said to be the incarnation of Brahma in Naimisaranya where God Vishnu initiated him into the mysteries of worship. It is also said that he came to the earth to organise the worship of the Lord (in image or idol) firmly in his area. Vaikhanas Sastra is the scripture of the sect. Bodhayana of the pre-christian era mentions it as a guide to Vanaprastas and anchorites.

According to it Narayana is both Niskal and Sakal manifesting Himself everywhere in both the aspects. Sri Lakshmi is His ever blissful potential power assuming different forms to suit the sportful volition of Vishnu while projecting the universe of spirit (cetana) and matter (acetana). They accept the three ultimate entities of Prakriti, acit (matter), cit (Jiva) and Iswara. They differ with other Vaishnava schools in the predominence they give to Sri.

They do not worship the Alwars (saints) and Acharyas nor brand their bodies with the emblems of cakra (disc), sanka (conch) etc., as other schools do. They do not cite the Tamil Prabandhams during worship. This sect live mostly in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada districts and their number is comparatively small.

Narayana, the Supreme Being is the desired deity of worship of this sect. Like other sects they bear similar traits and their behaviour is common. The Narayanopanishad is the most authentic Sruti supporting their view. They also quote the Rik Veda (1/22/20-21) in their support.

(f) KARMAHINA OR NISKAMA :—

According to this sect Vishnu is the Supreme Being. He is all pervading. He is the goal. The realisation of this goal is liberation. They do not prefer action and shun it. Worship of other gods is useless. The practice of meditation and Japa (uttering the name of God) etc. which are considered to be essentially necessary for the realisation of the goal have no value and the spiritual guide is not necessary. They do not even care to honour the injunction of Scriptures which prescribe the practice of Sandya Gayatri (morning, noon, and evening prayers) and other daily duties of a man. As said before these customs and conventions differ according to the tradition of the sects preferring either knowledge or action; this sect belongs to the former group.

Vaisnava sects existing at present.

There are four main sects e. g. (i) Sri sect, (ii) Brahma sect, (iii) Rudra sect and (iv) Sanak sect. The origion of the Sri sect is said to be Sri, the beloved consort of Vishnu, the Lord of the Universe. Mention of this is found specially in the Padmapuran. According to the same Puran, Brahma (the creator) is the founder of this sect. The Rudra sect is said to have originated from Rudra. Vishnuswamy is the great supporter of this sect. Nimbark is the staunch supporter of the Sanak sect which is said to have originated from the sage Sanaka. The system of worship, customs and traditions as set forth by their original founders are still prevalent to some extent among the different sects. The above four sects now pass in the name of Ramanuja, Madhwacharya, Vishnuswamy and Nimbark as they are respectively the staunch supporters of those four sects. Though Sri Gauranga, belongs to the Madhwacharya sect, he differs from them in many respects in practical affairs. For this reason the sect founded by him is known as the Sri Gouranga sect or Sri Chaitanya sect. His influence is very great in the whole of Bengal and Orissa where almost all from the king to the street beggar, from the Brahmin to the untouchable, honour this religion and embrace it.

(i) SRI SECT :—

As said before, this sect is said to have originated from Sri, the beloved consort of Lord Vishnu and is strongly supported by the Padma puran. Ramanujacharya, the staunch adherent of this sect, by his perseverance and zeal, made it very popular among the common people throughout the country. In course of time the religion of this sect became very famous. Bodhayan Vritti, the famous philosophical treatise of this religion made the background of this sect much stronger.

Born in 1027 A. D. at Sri Perumbudur, in a Brahmin family, Ramanuja, after finishing his general training in boyhood, studied Vedanta under Yadavaprakash of Conjeeveram but he could not support all the intrepretation given by the teacher. After being fully acquainted with the mysteries of Vedanta by Perianambi at Madhuraantakam he took Sanyas. This popular prince of the ascetics settled at Srirangam and composed the commentaries on the Brahma Sutras (Sri Bhasya), Gita and the Upanishads. The Vedas, Agamas, Purans, and the Prabands are the basis of his theology.

Regarding the relation of the world to God, he holds that God is real and independent ; the soul is also real but is utterly dependent on God. Matter and soul exist in the body of Brahman who is the controlling power. The doctrine of karma and rebirth finds acceptance by him. According to him the central teaching of the Upanishads, Gita, Brahma sutra and other scriptures is the attainment of devotion. Devotion to God is the essence of Bhakti. It is the most effective means of salvation, which is not disapearace from God, but relieving the soul from bondage. It is equality with God.

He explains away all error. Knowledge is real ; but it is imperfect, partial, and is not the whole of reality. It is an adjunct of the self which is an ego and never a part of the self. The self is not knowledge but is only the object of consciousness. God is full of auspicious qualities. His glory is so vast that it eludes the grasp of the finite mind. Out of tenderness for the devotees the Absolute Being descends, without putting away His essential divine nature, in different modes, e g. images (archa), incarnations (vibhava) and manifestations (vyuha), to relieve the burden of men.

The influence of this sect is very much prevalent in Tamil and Telegu parts, Rajputana, Marwar and some parts of Guzrat. According to some, Lord Anantadeva incarnates himself as Ramanuja. The 'Divya Charita' is a famous book of this sect in the Canarese language. The main centre of the sect is in South India. According to some there were 700 monasteries of this sect throughout the country. At present there are many monasteries of which Badarikasrama is the main. Laksmi and Narayana are the chief deities to be worshipped jointly or separately. Ram and Sita, Krishna and Rukmini and other incarnations of Sri Krishna should be worshipped jointly or separately according to the choice of the devotee. There are many classifications of the devotees of this sect.

Both Sanyasins (religious mendicants) and householders can be the spiritual guide of this sect but persons coming from the castes below the rank of Brahmins are not allowed to give initiation. There are many temples of this sect of which the temples of Laksmi, Padmanabha, Varadaraja, Balaji, Ranganath in South India, Jagannath in Orissa, Badrinath in the Himalayas, and Vishnu in Dwaraka are very famous. There are many monasteries of this sect in Puri, Rameswar, Sri Rangam, Kanchi etc. and they are owners of immense property.

Those who practise Brahmacharya (continence) and other spiritual practices in the house of the spiritual guide are known as 'Upakurvana', and those who embrace the life of renunciation after Brahmacharya without entering the household life are known as 'Naistika'. At the time of initiation they put on the imprints of conch and disc on the right and left hand respectively which are never blotted out.

They wear silk cloth after bath. Wearing cotton yarn cloth at the time of taking food is not allowed. Taking food in the afternoon is forbidden. Cooking and taking of food must be in a secret place. There are sub-divisions of this sect. One is called Abarani and the other Anabarani. The former has to undergo rigourous rules of discipline. One has to address another, 'I am a mere servant.' The middle mark on the forehead of this sect is the symbol of Laksmi.

They are the upholders of Visisthadvaita which is known as qualified monism or non-qualified dualism. According to them God manifests Himself, as (i) Archa, (ii) Vibhava, (iii) Vyuha and (iv) Antaryamin. (i) Archa is the image of God. (ii) Vibhava implies incarnation as found in the scripture e. g. Matsya, Kurma etc. (iii) Vyuha is the most subtle being. There are four Vyuhas e g. Vasudeva, Balaram, Anirudha and Pradyumnan. Of these Vasudeva is considered to be the supreme Being. (iv) Antaryamin implies the indwelling spirit.

God is endowed with all the necessary attributes of which six are very prominent. They are (a) Viraja (b) Vimritu (c) Vishoka (d) Vijigisha (e) Satyakama and (f) Satya sankalpa. (a) Viraja implies freedom from Rajas (activity). (b) Vimritu is freedom from death ie, He is eternal. (c) Vishoka is freedom from sorrow arising from fear, agony etc. He is ever blissful. (d) Vijigisha is freedom from hunger, thirst etc. He is self-contented. (e) Satyakama is desiring truth always. (f) Satya sankalpa implies the fulfilment of true desires.

They observe some principles for their worship. These are known as (i) Abhigaman (ii) Ijya (iii) Upadana (iv) Swadhyaya and (v) Yoga. (i) Abhigaman implies the cleaning with devotion of the temple with its surrounding and the entrance to it. (ii) Ijya is the worship of God in which the sacrifice of animals is strictly prohibited. (iii) Upadana implies collection of flowers, scents etc. the essential accessories as enjoined in their scripture for the worship of God. (iv) Swadhyaya implies the study of the Vaisnava hymns and prayers, the commentary of Ramanuja and other allied scriptures helping the mental growth of the devotees and also the uttering of the name of the Lord with a clear understanding of the meaning underlying it. (v) Yoga implies the practice of meditation of God by controlling the senses, both external and internal.

The items mentioned here are very important for the worship of God. The effect of the worship of God with those processes is the attainment of Vaikuntadham where Vishnu dwells permanently and also the attainment of bliss for ever. By such worship the devotee can acquire all the qualities except that of being the controlling agent of everything. This view is supported by the Taittiriya Upanishad (1/6/2) and also by the Brahma Sutra (4/4/17).

Their main scriptures are the commentary of Ramanuja, Dramiracharya, Nyayasidhi, Sidhitrayas, Bhasyavivaran, Prajnaparitrana, Prameya Sangraha, Nyaya Kulish, Nyaya Sudarsan, Nyayasara, Tattwadipa, Tattwanirnaya, Vedanta Vijay, Parasariya Vijaya, Gita Bhasya. They are prevalent among the subsects of Ramanuja which are known as Vadagalai and Tenkalai.

BRANCHES OF SRI SECTS :—

(a) Ramanandi :—The adherents of these sects are known as Ramayat. They live in the northern part of India. Ram or Vishnu or any other incarnation is the object of their worship. Like the Ramanuja sect they put on Tilak and sectarian traits on the forehead, with the only difference that their traits are shorter. They do not pay much importance to rigourous rules. Suradas, the poet Tulsidas the author of 'Ramcharit manas' now translated into Russian, and Jayadeva the author of the

'Gitagovinda' the most melodious epic, belong to this sect.

(b) Kabir :—Kabir, a disciple of Ramananda was the founder of this sect. The religious sect founded by this great soul is known as 'Kabirpanthi'. They do not put much stress on the path as enjoined in the scripture. They follow their own course. Their number is very great in the north-western part of India. The sayings of Kabir which are very instructive and beautiful pass by the name of 'Kabir Doha'. The adherents of other sects such as the Satnami, Sunyavadi, Nanakpanthi and Dadupanthi follow his sayings with much regard. Though they have regard for other gods, their regard for Vishnu is the greatest. There are both monks and householders in this sect. The householders worship the image of God but the monks are not bound to follow such a custom. They may or may not observe the custom prevalent among the householders. Their main form of prayer is to sing the name of God. They put on Tilak of sandal paste on the forehead, a garland of Tulsi beads on the neck and on the hand. They lay much stress on non-violence, truth, indifference to pleasure, and devotion to the spiritual guide and God.

They do not put much stress on external customs. The maintenance of purity is the most essential duty of the sect. Their motto is to mix with all freely, but one's own principle is to be maintained under any circumstance. They have a good number of works of literature numbering about 200, dealing with discrimination, devotional songs and many of these seem to have been written by his disciples after his demise. Most of his sayings are in Hindi metres called 'Chopal', 'Doha' etc. When they show respect to any superior they utter, 'Bandegi' ie, (salutation to you) and the superior replies, 'by the grace of the spiritual guide'. Though the followers of Kabir differ from other sects of the Hindus in their method of prayer, their religion has its source in Hinduism and their customs have similarity with those of the early Vaishnavas in many respects. They admit only the existence of one God who is eternal, beginningless, independent, all powerful, endowed with all qualities and is with from, and free from all human weakness. Their moral discipline consists of simplicity, compassion, truth and regard for the Guru. He condemns image worship and the distinction of caste. He regrets in his Doha : 'The Brahmins remain ignorant, the learned suffer, the cheat prospers, the chaste woman cannot get a piece of cloth to wear, whereas the prostitutes have plenty to waste ; milk is sold with difficulty, but wine at ease'. Kabir had twelve disciples from whom twelve branches are said to have arisen.

Besides these there are other branches such as 'Das kabiri' and 'Hanse Kabiri' etc.

(c) KHAKI :—This is a different branch of the Ramanuja sect included in the Ramayat group. According to some this sect is of recent origin. Kila is said to be the founder of this group. Their customs and conventions differ from those of other sects. They colour their cloth with earth and ashes. Though Vaisnava, they have regard for Siva, besmear their body with ashes, and keep matted hair on the head. Ram, Sita and Hanuman are their objects of worship. Their main monastery is at Hanumangarh near Aycdhya and at Jaipur. This sect is found mostly in Farakkabad.

(d) MULUKDASI :—Mulukdas, the founder of this sect, came from a trader class of Manikpur in the district of Allahabad. This sect is said to have extended their influence during the time of Aurangazeb. Ram is the object of their worship. Their main centre is at Manikpur.

But at Benaras, Allahabad, Lucknow, Ayodhya, Barabanki and Puri they have monasteries. The sectarian small line on their forehead is the speciality of this sect. Unlike the Ramanandi sect they accept householders as their spiritual guide. They have some literature expressing the glories of Ram.

(e) DADU :— Dadu, the founder of the sect bearing his name, came from a low family of Ahmedabad whose profession was carding. He preached his religion at the ripe old age of 67, during the time of Akbar. Uttering the name of Ram and worshipping Him as the Absolute Being without form and attributes are the objects of this sect. Putting on the sectarian mark on the forehead with sandal paste and wearing garlands of beads are against their principle. Of course they use a garland of beads for uttering the name of God. They wear a hand-made square or round cap on the head. They are classified under three heads (i) Virakta (ii) Naga and (iii) Vistardhari. (i) Viraktas are indifferent, devoting their time in the meditation of God; and they keep a karanga (a kind of begging pot).

(ii) Th Nagas are like disciplined soldiers and keep arms for the protection of themselves and of the sect. (iii) Vistardhari is a householder looking after household affairs. There are many subsects of these three branches of Dadu sects. Of these fifty two are said to be in existence. The members of the Dadu sect live mainly in Ajmere and Marwar. During the period between the fifteenth of January and and the fifteenth of February, a very big fair of this sect takes place in Narendragram from the first day of the new moon to the full moon night. Narendragram is a place near Rajputana where a large number of people gather from different places on this occasion. This place is considered to be very sacred as herein their founder is said to have attained success in life. The reminiscences, bedding and other articles used by Dadu and the authoritative books of this sect are preserved here. Vishasika is the most instructive book of this sect.

(f) ROYDASI :— Roydas or Ruidas was the disciple of Rāmananda and the founder of this sect. He came of a family of low status in society called Chamar whose profession was shoe making. There are many 'Dohas'

(a kind of didactic religious poem) of this sect. Many of these 'Dohas' are mixed with the songs and hymns of the Sikhs.

(g) SENPANTHI :–

Sen, a disciple of Ramananda, was the founder of this sect. He came from a barber family. The prominent members of this sect were the spiritual guides of the royal family of Bandagarh. Other details of this sect are not available. Bhaktamal, a work of the Vaisnavas, mentions this sect.

(h) RAMSANEHI :—

They are known as Ramayat Vaisnavas. Ramcharan was the founder of this sect. They do not favour image worship. This sect is said to be of recent origin. Probably in 1828 Samvat this sect was established. They put on a garland on the neck and also a white long Tilak (sectarian mark with sandal paste). They are averse to the killing of animals and the eating of fish, meat etc. Ram is the object of their worship. Many of their customs are similar to those of the Jains.

After the death of the founder, whose body was cremated at Shapur temple in Rajasthan, some of his followers composed thousands of works depicting the glory of the good souls both among the Hindus and the Muslims. The people of this religious sect have to undergo a rigourous life e g, the practice of continence, control of the senses, of food, sleep and speech, and the practice of forbearance and compassion. They give up the things of enjoyment ; the acceptance of money, and injury to animals are forbidden. They wear a garland, put on the sectarian marks, drink water from a wooden pot and take food out of a stone or earthen plate. They are very careful in running the administration of the monasteries. The person in charge, in co-operation with other committee members consisting of seven members, has to look after the food, clothing, management, education and discipline of the inmates. Any member found guilty of any crime has to appear before the committee and is dealt with accordingly. There is another section of the sect called 'Videhi.' They remain naked. Mohini is a different group of this sect whose tongue has not been controlled. They have to practise silence for several years, but when the mind has been controlled they are allowed to talk. The women also can be religious teachers.

As said before, Ram is their chosen deity who is all powerful and is the cause of creation, preservation and dissolution. Beings are parts of Him. They do not observe the Holi, Dewali and other festivals, but observe Fuldol at Bahapur in the month of Falgun. They generally live in Guzerat, Bombay, Surat, Hyderabad, Poona, Ahmedabad, and Benares.

(ii) BRAHMA SECT.

According to the Padmapuran, Brahma, the creator, is the founder of this sect. But Madhwacharya is the greatest exponent of this sect. He is otherwise known as Ananda Tirtha or Vasudeva and is the author of 'Purna prajna darsan.' He explains Vedanta in the light of dualism and infuses a new life in this sect which passes by the name of the Madhwa sect, after his name. The main authoritative Sruti on which they depend mostly is the Narayana Upanishad which supports this view: 'Narayana alone existed, neither Brahma nor Sankara existed. From the beginning He is bliss and the lord also.' 'From the body of Vishnu the whole universe has been created.'

Madhwacharya was born in a village near Udipi in South Canara. He became proficient in Vedic learning. After Sanyas he developed the dualistic philosophy and wrote commentaries on the *Brahma Sutra*, *Gita* and *Vpanishads.* Jayathirtha's work on this commentary and Vyasaraja's *Chandika* on Jayathirtha's commentary are works of great importance.

Madhwacharya accepted two kinds of Reality (1) Swatantra (independent) and (2) Paratantra (dependent). Only the Supreme person is independent. The dependent are of two kinds e.g. Bhava (positive) and Abhava (negative). The positive may be *Cetana* (conscious) like souls and *Acetana* (unconscious) like matter and time. God, soul, and the world are three fundamental entities. They are real and eternal, the latter two are subordinate to God.

Brahman is identified with Vishnu as creating, maintaining, and destroying the world again and again. He is endowed with a supernatural body and is the inner ruler. (Antaryamin) of all souls. He is both transcedent and immanent. He manifests Himself in the Vyuhas (of various forms), appears now and then as Avatars (incarnations) and is mystically present in sacred images. Laksmi the divine consort is co-eternal with Him and all pervading without a material body. She is Nityamukta, and witnesses the glory of Vishnu through eternity. God's activity is the result of perfection. Karma and other things depend on Him. Matter originates from Prakriti and returns to it in course of time. God moulds forms out of Prakriti and exists Himself in it in various forms. Sri, Bhu and Durga, the three forms of Laksmi are three aspects of Prakriti. Avidya, the form of Prakriti, obscures the spiritual power as Jivaccadika sakti and screens off the Supreme as paramaccadika sakti. Laksmi though co-eternal with Vishnu is dependent on God.

There are three kinds of conscious soul under three gunas (1) Nitya (eternally free like Laksmi) (2) Mukta (freed from samsara e.g, devas, rishis and fathers) and (3) Bandha (bound). The Satwika souls go to heaven, the Rajasika revolve in samsara, and the Tamasika fall into hell. Mukti lies in Svarupa-sthiti (restoration to spiritual existence) after casting off unessential forms. It is fellowship with God and not identification.

The philosophy of this sect is supported by the statement of the Srutis dealing with difference. They admit five kinds of difference. Jiva (being) is different from Iswara (God.)

One Jiva is different from another Jiva. Similarly Jada (inertia) is different from Jiva. Jada is different from another Jada. The soul is the Supreme Being, Absolute, thoroughly independent and is endowed with unsurpassing qualities, whereas Jiva is endowed with limited power and is dependent. Jiva becomes liberated by His grace only. Iswara alone is truth, Absolute and Eternal. Had it not been so, the universe would have been ruined. According to this doctrine both Jiva and Jada are true ; not false, but perishable.

The presiding deities of this sect are Narayana, Laksmi, Siva, Parvati and Ganesh. Of these Vishnu or Narayana is the main deity. The object of life is to attain His grace. They do not admit Nirvan mukti which means final emancipation from matter and reunion with the Supreme Spirit, but prefer any of the four kinds of liberation known as Sarupya, Sayujya, Sannidya, and Sashti, according to the choice of the devotee. Sarupya means sameness of form with the deity, Sayujya intimate union with the desired deity, Sannidya presence before him, and Sashti possessing the same rank with him. They prefer pure devtion to attain the realisation of the goal.

The process of their worship is devotional. The cleaning of temples, the worship of the image of God, bath in the holy water of the sacred places, singing the name of God, chanting of prayers to Him, offering of flowers, fruits, food etc. and aratik which means waving of light before the image of God are the main processes of worship observed by them.

They put on the sectarian mark with sandal paste on the forehead, wear garlands of Tulsi beads on the neck, imprint on their body the symbols of Lord Vishnu which are conch, disc, club and lotus ; and they use a garland of Tulsi beads while uttering the name of God.

Their code of morality consists of compassion, desire for good, regard for truth, speaking sweet and true words, the study of the scriptures, offering gifts etc. These are some of the important items which they observe with great care.

Baladeva Vidyabhusan who is a well known commentator on the Brahma sutra gives a reference to the tenet of Madhwacharya in his work *Prameya Ratnavali* in a few words thus : Lord Hari is the Supreme Being, the world is different from God in reality, beings are dependent on Hari and are endowed with high and low sentiments, liberation is the realisation of the highest bliss, pure devotion is the means to the attainment of such an end, the various kinds of liberation described before are the proof, and Lord Hari alone is to be realised in the vast universe.

The main work of this sect is *Madhwa Vijaya*. They live mostly in South India. There are many house holders and Udasi Vaisnavas of this sect.

(iii) RUDRA SECT :—

This sect is said to have its origin from Rudra. Afterwards Vishnuswamy, otherwise known as Vallabhacharya, strengthened this sect by giving an impetus to it. He was the contemporary of Sri Gourangadeva, and mention is made of him in the *Chaitanya Charitamrita*. He was born in 1479A.D. and he died at the age of 53, leaving behind him sons and disciples. His second son Bimalnath became the spiritual head of his line after him. The spiritual heads of this sect are known as 'Goswamis' or the 'Goswamis of Gokul'. In course of time this sect became subdivided into different branches. Of these the Gokul Goswamis are very much respected. They have branches in Bombay, Kutch, Kathiawar, Central India and Malabar. In Mathura and Brindaban they have famous temples. The most important temple of this sect is Nathdwar in Ajmere. Jagannath and Dwaraka are the most sacred places of this sect.

Vallabha was a Telegu Brahmin of South India. The theistic interpretation of the Vedanta given by him is pure non-dualism. According to him the world is real. The souls, inanimate objects and the world are in essence one with Brahman. The relation between them is one of pure identity. Jiva, Kala or time, and Prakriti (Maya) are eternal in existence and have no separate existence apart from Brahman who can create without any connection with Maya. The world is not an illusory appearance. God is personified as Krishna. He is Karta, (doer) Bhokta, (enjoyer) and is endowed with Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (action). He appears in various forms to please his devotees. Ananda (bliss) is suppressed in human beings, in animals and in matter. By His will, Brahman can have Avirbhava (evolution) and Tirobhava (involution). The obscured bliss of Brahman is Jiva, who is one with Him and constitutes a part of Him. The recovery of the suppressed qualities makes the Jiva one with Brahman ; non-sentient objects are also filled with Brahman.

There are three kinds of jivas : (1) Sudha i.e. pure jivas whose Aisvarya (lordly qualities) are not obscured by ignorance. (2) Samsari i. e. jivas caught in the meshes of Avidya experiencing birth, death etc. due to their connection with the gross and subtle bodies and (3) Mukta i. e. jivas freed from samsara through their insight into truth.

Salvation can be attained by the grace of God. Bhakti is the chief means. Jnana is useful ; but self mortification is deprecated. The body is the temple of God ; the attempt to destroy it is meaningless. The highest goal is not liberation, but the eternal service of Krishna, and participation in his sport in the celestial Brindaban.

Their Vedantic principle is Visudha Advaitavada or Sudha Advaitavada. According to them Saguna and Sudha (pure) Brahman is the cause of the universe. Jivas (beings) originate from Him like sparks from a flame. It is different from the Advaita of Sankaracharya. In liberation there is no complete liberation of the Self. Sri Krishna is the Supreme Being. The means to the attainment of bliss is love and devotion.

They admit of five kinds of liberation such as Salokya, Sarupya, Sayujya, Samipya, and Sashti which have been already explained.

The service of God constitutes the main item of their devotion. The worship of God with flowers, fruits etc., decoration with flowers, garlands, scents etc., offering of various delicious food and aratrik (waving of light before the image of God) in the morning, noon, evening and at night are some of the important items of the worship of God. Special worship on car festival day, Rashpurnima and Janmastami day are specially observed by them.

They put on the Vaisnava mark on the forehead and a red mark on the nose. They also bear the imprints of conch, disc, club and lotus on their body, wear garlands of Tulsi beads on the neck and use them for uttering the name of God.

(iv) SANAK OR NIMBARK SECT.

This sect is said to have its origin from the four renowned sages namely Sanat Kumar, Sanak, Sanandan and Sanatan. Nimbark was a staunch propagator of this sect, and he devoted his whole hearted energy to the healthy growth of this sect in the different parts of India.

Nimbark was a Telegu Brahmin of Vaisnava faith. He appeared about the 11th. century after Ramanuja, but was prior to Madhwa. He was the author of Dasasloki and a commentator on the Brahma sutra. According to him, the jiva, like the sun which is at once light and the source of light, has both from and is the possessor of knowledge (but not in Sankara's sense). The relation of the soul to its attributes is one of Dharmin and Dharma, the qualified and the qualification, whith no identity of difference and non difference between the two. Both difference and non difference are real. The Jiva is atomic in size with no independent knowledge and activity.

Inanimate objects are classified under three eternal tattwas (1) Aprakṛita i. e. not derived from Prakriti e, g, the stuff of the divine body (2) Prakrita i. e. derived from Prakriti through the three gunas and (3) Kala or time, the basic principle.

Isvara is the governor (Niyunta) of all. As the manifestor of cit and acit in a subtle form He, the Sakti of Brahman, is the material cause and as the agent brings about the union of individual souls with their respective worlds. The universe being the manifestation of God cannot be dismissed as an illusory world. He is the efficient cause. Krishna and Radha take the place of Narayana and Laksmi. Prapatti or submission is the way of deliverance. Bhakti is love and devotion, and not meditation. The worship of other Gods is forbidden. The ethical rules prescribed in the scriptures are to be followed. Karma and devotion are the means to the acquisition of the knowledge of Brahman.

They worship Sri krishna as represented in his boyhood. Sometimes they worship both Sri krishna and Radha, the pair and devote their whole-hearted energy to worship, by offering flowers, scents, fruit, food, and aratrik to Him and also by the chanting of hymns in His praise. *Nimbark Brata Nirnay* is the most authoritative book of this sect.

The philosophical tenet of this sect is Bedabedavada which means that there is unity between Jiva and the world, and between Jiva and God. In a way there is difference ; but in a different way there is unity. This tenet was later expounded by Sri Gouranga, Baladeva Vidyabhusan and Jiva Goswami, and was then know as Achinta bedabedvad. The Jiva being the manifestation of the power of Sri Krishna, and the world being the transformation of His Maya, there is the relation of unity ; whereas the same Jiva being a part and parcel of Sri Krishna there is a relation of difference. Both difference and unity are unthinkable.

The process of worship is devotional. Sri Krishna is the Supreme Being. He alone is to be worshipped. Devotion is the means to the realisation of the end. They admit Salokya, Sayujya, Samipya, Sashti etc. the different kinds of liberation mentioned before. They bear the mark of the Vaisnavas with sandal paste, put on a garland of Tulsi beads on the neck, and use a similar garland while uttering the name of God.

The religious books of this sect are the *Srimat Bhagavat Gita*, and the Brahma Sutra with the commentaries written by an eminent person of this sect. Besides these books which are considered to be the most authoritative, there are other books also. Two branches are said to have originated from two disciples. One Harivyas was the founder of one sect. He was a householder and his followers, too, were householders. In Mathura and Brindaban on the bank of the river Jumna, otherwise known as Dhruva Kshetra, there are branches of this sect. Their number is very large in Mathura specially.

SRI GOURANGA SECT

Of all the Vaisnava sects this sect has attained the highest eminence in India. The spiritual fervour which flooded the country, the broad liberalism, the high standard of culture which prevailed in this sect, and lastly the personality and love of the great founder of this sect, are perhaps some of the causes which attracted the attention of the people throughout the country.

Mahaprabhu was the founder of this sect. Sri Gourangadeva, who was commonly known as the incarnation of love, was born in 1485—A. D. (1407 Sakabda) of a Brahmin family in Navadwip in Bengal which had attained the topmost eminence in the whole of India specially for its culture. There are some who call this an offshoot of the Madhwa sect on the ground that Advaitacharya, a contemporary of Sri Gouranga and very much revered by him, was a Vaisnava of the Madhwa sect.

Sri Gourangadeva was initiated by Iswar Puri, a disciple of Madhavendra Puri, who was a very great spiritual teacher of the time. Some one compares Mahaprabhu to a wonderful Kalpavriksha which means a tree that yields the desired fruit to everybody. Of this wonderful tree of wish-fulfilment Madhavendra Puri was the root, Advaita the sprout, Nityananda, another disciple of Madhavendra Puri, the shoulder; and savants like Bakreswar and others, the original branches. Its perennial sweetness permeates throughout its limbs, devotion is its flower ; the love of Sri Krishna, its fruit. Its roots penetrate through the ocean of bliss, its shade is a soothing balm for the fatigue resulting from the troubles felt in the journey of life ; and it is the bestower of the desired objects of the devotees.

Sri Gouranga, Nityananda, Advaitacharya, Gadadhar and Sri Vasa are said to be the five jewels of this sect.

According to the Chaitanya Charitamrita, an authoritative book of this sect on Sri Gouranga, the main causes of the arrival of an incarnation on earth, are two : (i) bliss and (ii)) extreme compassion. Sri Krishna, the Supreme Being, is full of bliss. Eternal happiness undiminished by the least tinge of sorrow lies in Him alone, who out of extreme compassion for the welfare of beings descends when necessity demands to the earth to lead them to the ocean of bliss and establish the kingdom of virtue by conquering vice. *Chaitanya Charitamrita* with its commentary *Urdha Amnaya Sanhita* and *Jamal* are some of the important books in which a thorough discussion is made on the proof, the necessity for the descent of such a great incarnation and its effect viz. the flood of spiritual fervour in society, religion and culture. Nityananda and Advaitacharya are regarded as the limbs of Sri Chaitanya, like the two wings of a bird.

The devotees and admirers of Sri Chaitanya are many. Of these Nityananda, Advaita, Gadadhar and Sri Vasa are famous. Haridas, Swarup Damodar and Rai Ramananda are also well known devotees. Besides these there are innumerable other devotees and admirers of Sri Chaitanya, Nityananda and Advaita. Of these, six Goswamis, six Chakrabartis, eight Kabirajas, twelve Gopalas, and sixty-four Mohantas are worth mentioning. The influence of Sri Chaitanya is largely felt in Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa, Brindaban, Mathura, Madras and in some parts of Bombay.

The six Goswamis mentioned above are Sanatan, Rup, Gopal Bhatta, Raghunath Bhatta, Jiba Goswami and Raghunathdas. They are very learned, and have literary contributions to their credit which are regarded as very valuable in the philosophy, Smriti and literature of the Vaisnavas.

Mahaprabhu, Nityananda and Advaita have not left anything in writing. *Haribhakti Bilash*, *Vaisnava Toshini*, a very beautiful and learned commentary on the tenth skanda of the Bhagavat, by basing upon which Viswanath Chakrabarty is said to have written his commentary on the Bhagavat, and *Brihat Bhagavatamrita*, a very instructive treatise dealing with devotion, religion and the Supreme Being (Sri Krishna) by Sanatan Goswami, are some of the well known books of Vaisnava religion and philosophy for the guidance of the devotees and spiritual aspirants. *Nitya Naimitic Dharma*, *Kriya Puja* and *Brata Upabaser Byabasta* by Gopal Bhatta are also well known books. *Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu*, a very beautiful and valuable book of Vaisnava philosophy dealing with the means of the conquest of the mind and the senses, *Ujjal Nilamani*, a very highly developed literary piece of work, *Lagu Bhagavat-*

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amrita, a very descriptive and instructive book dealing critically with the doctrines of incarnations and their classifications, growth, standard and the respective dhams or regions assigned to them, and dramas such as *Bidagdha Madhava*, *Lalit Madhav*, *Dhanakeli* and *Kaumudi* by Rup Goswami are well known works of Vaisnava literature. Besides these there are other books by the same author such as the *Nataka Chandrika*, *Hansaduta*, *Uddhava Sandesh Padyabali* and *Stavamala.* There are many other books which are passed by the advocates of the Sahajia Vaisnava sects as among the books of Vaisnava philosophy. The doctrines of the Sahajia Vaisnava sect are contrary to those of the other Vaisnava sects and are disliked by them. *Sri Bhagavat Sandarva* by Jiba Goswami dealing with Brahman, the Supreme Being (Sri Krishna), is a very valuable philosophical book. It asserts that the Vaisnava doctrines as prescribed by the Bhagavat is the essence of all philosophy. The means to the realisation of such doctrines is devotion ; and the worship of the Gopis increases one's devotion. Its language is very stiff, and its ideas are philosophical. It is specially preferred by the learned. It refutes the doctrine of Maya by Sankara and establishes Achinta bedabeda, meaning there by that there is both difference and unity between the Jiva and the world, and between the Jiva and God ; but both difference and unity are unthinkable. According to it the doctrine of Madhwa is unacceptable, and the qualified Monism of Ramanuja is unwanted ; but the doctrine of difference and unity as held by Bhaskaracharya is accepted. The language of Vaisnava philosophy is stiff, and the commentaries are very lengthy. *Sarva Sambadini* by the same author deals with the commentary on *Sat Sandharva* and gives an explanation of the philosophical doctrines of Vaisnava religion. Besides these, there are other books such as the *Gopal Champu,* which is a mixed epic (in both prose and verse) on Sri Krishna based on the life incidents as described in the 10th. Skanda of the *Bhagavat* and *Harinamamrita,* as also a commentary on Ujjal Nilamani, *Brahma Samhita.* Gopal Tapaniya Upanishad and *Bhakti Rassamrita* are also famous. *Haribhakti Bilash* and the commentary on *Krishna Karnamrita* by Gopal Bhatta Goswami and the *Stavamala* and the *Muktacharit* by Raghunathdas, are also well known books of Vaisnava literature. The Goswamis of Brindaban are said to be like mines of love, and all the Vaisnava sects are indebted to them.

Many are the devotees of Mahaprabhu. (Chhota) Haridas, Dwija Haridas, Pandit-Haridas, Haridas Brahmachari (all belonging to the Nityananda group) ; Brahma Haridas (a Mahomedan who is said to have repeated the names of God three lakhs of times a day), Vasudeva Sarvabhom, the renowned Vedantin of the 15th century in Nabadwip (who afterwards recognised Mahaprabhu as an incarnation), Raja Pratap Rudradeva, the king of Orissa ; Sarup Damodar, Rai Ramananda (both very learned) and savants like Bakreswar and others were among the well known devotees of Mahaprabhu. The remains of the great Mahaprabhu have been preserved at Gambbira at Puri.

The Devotees of this sect are divided into two groups named after Srivasa and Sri Ram, two very learned souls who were the founders of these two groups. Chandra Shekhar Acharya-ratna, according to whom Mahaprabhu used to dance under the intoxication of the feminine deity Radha, is said to be the founder of another group called Bara Sakha (Big branch or section). Pundarik Vidyanidhi who was the spiritual guide of Gadadhar and others and a friend of

Swarup Damodar, Gadadhar pandit, Jagadananda pandit who was a great favourite of Mahaprabhu and who attended to and arranged for his food and looked after his comforts, Raghava pandit, and Haridas Thakur who was a life long Mahomedan celebate are some of the important persons. Besides these there are others such as Rup Sanatan who attached great importance to Brindaban as the holiest of all holy places for the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. Gadadhardas was a powerful devotee of Ariyadaha (near Calcutta, where there is still a Sripada or holy place for the Vaisnavas) Shivananda Sen, another devotee, came from a respectable Vaidya family of Kancharapara and he was the author of *Sri Chaitanya Charit Mahakabya*, *Sri Chaitanya Chandrodaya*, *Ananda Brindaban*, *Champu Kabya*, *Alankar Kaustuva*, *Krishna O Gourduripika*, *and Chaitanya sataka Gunabali.* Murari Gupta who came from a very respectable Vaidya family was the frist among the learned to keep in writing an account of the life of Mahaprabhu which is known as the *Chaitanya Charitamrita or Murari Gupter Karcha*

There are other branches of the devotees of Mahaprabhu such as the Srikanda Nibasi Sakhas known as Goswamis, the Kirtania Sakha originating from the well known musician Mukunda Datta, an intimate friend of Mahaprabhu from boyhood, and also other branches of devotees originating from Damodar pandit Sankar. Besides these, there are other lines such as :—(i) Prabhu Sanatan (descendants of Nityananda and Advaita) , (2) Dwadas Gopals (who were intimately connected with the bond of love with Mahaprabhu and Nityananda, and who were said to have known Sri Krishna in their previous incarnations as Sridam, Sudam and others ; but who are now known as Abhiram Thakur, Sundar Thakur and others). They are found at the Sripada at Khanapur and Maheshpur ; (3) Upa Gopalas (who are said to have played the role of Subal and others previously ; but are at present known as Halayuda Pandit, having their Sripada at Ramchandrapur), (4) Chaturshasti Mahantas (playing formerly the role of Narada and others ; but at present known as Srivasa and others, having their Sripada at Nabadwip). (5) Ashtasakhi (formerly playing the role of Lalita and others, but now known as Sri Rup and others), (6) Naba manjari (formerly known as Sri Rup manjari and others, but now known as Rup Goswami and others) (7) Ashta kabirayas (formerly playing the roles of Sulochana and others, but now known as Ramchandra kabiraj and others), all those may also be mentioned.

Their mode of preaching is very attractive. They give initiation and encourage the study of the scriptures and adopt such means as would stimulate the healthy growth of devotion; but the most attractive part of their preaching is the singing of the name of God loudly to the accompaniments of the khol (drum) and kartal (cymbals). As a result of their mode of teaching not only the ordinary people but also many learned souls such as kings, zamindars, politicians, high officials, devotees and even atheists, as well as persons of different religions were attracted; and they all embraced this cult. Of these Sarvabhom who was a very learned soul, Prakasananda who was a Vedantin professing the doctrine of Maya, Ragunath who was a logician or Naiyayik, Pratap Rudradeva the king of Orissa, Jagai and Madhai the two notorious brothers, Bijlikhan who was a Pathan soldier, Chand Kazi who was the governor of Nabadwip, Hossen shah who was the governor of Gour in Bengal, Sri Vasa who was a great devotee, Sanatan the shrewd politician, Raghunathdas who was a well known zamindar and Raja Ramananda were amoug the most famous.

The customs and conventions of the Vaisnavas are rigourous. *Haribhakti Bilas*, an important book written for the guidance of the Vaisnavas by Sanatan, deals with their customs and conventions. The purity of mind and body, initiation by the spiritual guide, cleanliness, the holding of the staff as prescribed by scriptures, bath, prayer, the service of the spiritual guide, putting on the forehead the sectarian mark with sandal paste, imprinting on the body the symbols of conch, disc, club and lotus, wearing on the neck the garlands of Tulsi beads, plucking of Tulsi leaves, the cleaning of temples, the worship of God five times a day, aratrik (waving of light, flowers etc. before the deity), the offering of food etc. for Sri Krishna, going on pilgrimages, visiting temples to see the image of Krishna, uttering the names of God, praying, going round temples, the eating of the food offered, not resorting to places where the Vaisnavas are abused, resorting to holy company, service of the good, the shunning of evil company, the control of the senses both external and internal, hearing the sacred scripture *Bhagavat*, fasting on the 11th. day of the moon, and the observance of other rites and festivals are among the subjects which are

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thoroughly discussed in the book above mentioned. Sri Krishna or Radha (the pair) or Gourangadeva is the object of their worship. The householders and monks keep a tuft of hair at the back, and wear white cloth. Wearing silk is forbidden.

Haribhakti Bilas, *Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu*, and *Ujjal Nilmani*, are the religious books of this sect. They deal specially with the worship of God without desire. Devotion is regarded as the most important factor that leads to the realisation of this end. The *Srimat Bhagavat* is the most sacred and authoritative book of this sect, and is regarded as their *Brahma Sutra*.

The writings of Jayadeva (the author of the Gitagovinda), Vidyapati, and Chandidas show the influence of the Radha-Krishna cult in Bengal and Bihar. The personality and character of Sri Chaitanya attracted a very large number of people. He gave a new form to this cult by following the democratic principles of accepting converts from Islam. Jiba Goswami (16th. century) and Baladeva who lived much later supplied the philosophical basis of this sect.

They admit the five principles, God, soul, maya or prakriti, Swarupa Sakti with its elements of knowledge (jnan) and Suddha satva (pure matter) and Kala or time. The ultimate reality is Vishnu, the god of love possessing Sat, Cit and Ananda. When free from the qualities of prakriti He is Nirguna ; and when endowed with the qualities of omniscience, omnipresence etc. He is Saguna. The qualities expressing His nature inhere in Him and this expression is Swarupa Sambandha. His Swarupa Sakti supports Jiva Sakti (also called Tatasta Sakti), which, in turn, supports maya Sakti (also called Bahiranga Sakti). They cannot exist apart from God. He is the efficient cause by His unchangeable Para Sakti and the material cause through His other energies called Apara Sakti. He is love personified and the power of joy. The Supreme assumed infinite forms. Krishna is the chief. He has three powers (1) Cit, (maintaining His power as intelligence and will) (2) Maya (creating the world) and Jiva (preserving the souls). When viewed in Himself He is Brahman ; and as the creater of the world He is Bhagavan. The universe and His creatures, though separate and distinct from Him are dependent on Him.

The power of maya fetters souls by making them forget their real nature. The force of karma can be overcome by Bhakti which is the way of salvation. No man or woman is too low for the grace of God. Mercy, humility, tranquillity, freedom from worldly desires, and purity of heart are emphasised.

The philosophy of this sect is based on Vedanta ; but the members of the sect give different interpretations according to their view point. Only impartial scholars can judge how far their interpretation is based on the Sruti and reason, but the devotional aspect on which they lay special stress is the most important factor specially for spiritual aspirants. In his book, *Sat Sandarva,* and in his commentary, *Krama sandarva,* Jiva Goswami has thoroughly discussed the view point and philosophy of this sect. According to this view, Sri Krishna is the Supreme Being. He alone is to be meditated upon. His name alone is to be uttered. The *Gopala Upanishad* corroborates this view. Devotion which does not seek any reward and which is otherwise known as Parabhakti (purest devotion) is the only means to the realisation of the desired end. The Realisation of the Supreme Being is the end of life. According to their doctrine the Jiva, (being) though small like an atom, is Nitya (eternal) ; and is a servant of Sri Krishna. Devotion to the lotus feet of God is the highest kind of liberation. Though other kinds of liberation such as Salokya, Sayujya etc. are admitted, they are not to be desired. The form, attributes etc. of the images of God and the parts played by them are true and eternal. The doctrine of Maya which is supported by Sankaracharya is strongly criticised and refuted by Jiva Goswami in his commentary on Sat Sandarva and on the *Bhagavat* ; and it is said to be too unsuitable to be supported. Baladeva Vidyabhusan, too, does the same thing in his *Gobinda Bhasya.* They never accept Nirvisesha Brahman ; Savisesha Brahman is their goal. They vehemently oppose the Vivartavad of Sankara ; but they support the Parinamavad of the Sankyas. According to them though the world is subject to destruction it is not false. They are neither monists like Sankara, nor qualified monists or nonqualified dualists like Ramanuja, nor dualists like Madhwa ; but they prefer the Bhedabhedavad of Nimbark though they differ from him in some respects. They accept the difference and unity of both the Jiva (being) and Brahman. As both difference and unity are unthinkable, they call it the Achintyabhedabhedavad. The saying of the Sruti, 'He is bliss personified; bliss is the nature of Brahman' is accepted as the most authoritative basis of their doctrine. They have tried to establish their doctrine on devotion and love and they place them above mere knowledge of the supreme. But how far their attempts have attained success is to be judged only by impartial savants.

VAISNAVA SUBSECTS

(1) Ativari :—Though they are a sub sect of the Goudiya Vaisnavas, they differ from them in their customs and manners. Their method of worship is also different from them. Jagannath, the founder of this sect was a Vaisnava monk, who was indifferent to the world. It is said that he differed with Mahaprabhu and was forsaken by him. His explanation of the Bhagavat is based on the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. His followers generally live in Orissa and have a math (monastery) at Puri. Their sectarian mark is big and prominent.

(2) Ahamad Panthi :—They are like the Baul class. Though they are Vaisnavas they prefer to worship God without attributes and do not worship in images. They put on a garland

of Tulsi beads, grow a beard and moustache. They are a sub sect of the Ramayat group.

(3) Aaul—They are a sub sect of Goudiya Vaisnavas. They are otherwise known as Sahajia Kartabhaja ; but they seem to be more liberal than the others. They shave and do not grow hair like the Bauls and Nyaras. The followers of this sect are rarely seen now-a-days.

(4) Akhara :—They are a sub sect of the Ramananda cult and are subdivided into seven sections ; e. g. Nirvani, Khaki, Santhosi, Nirmothi, Balabadri, Tatambari and Digambari.

(5) Appapanthi :—A sub sect of the Ramanuja Vaisnavas, they act in their own way and do not admit the necessity of spiritual guides. Mulladas, a goldsmith, was the founder of this sect. They have their Gadi (asrama) at Akhara, west of Ayodhya.

Ram is their chosen deity. There are both monks and householders in this sect. The monks wear yellow shirts and a cap on the head and they put on the sectarian mark. Some grow hair and beard and some shave their head.

(6) Wake kari :—They are a kind of Vaisnava sub sect living in some parts of Bombay. Their profession is to beg. They put on garlands of Tulsi beads on the neck and on

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the arm and also wear Gerua (orange coloured) cloth while begging.

(7) Kartabhaja :—They are a sub section of Goudiya Vaisnavas. Though Ramsaran Pal (also known as Thakur, Karta) of Ghosepara in West Bengal preached the doctrine of this sect, one Aaulechand is said to be their founder. He had twenty-two disciples. He observed no distinction of caste, but took food from all and treated all equally. He instructed both the Hindus and the Mohammedans. His followers believe that he was an incarnation of God. They also believe that Sri Krishna, Sri Chaitanya and Aaulechand are one and the same. In the Persian language 'Aaulia' is 'Bujug', meaning one who is endowed with divine power. He could perform a number of miracles such as making the blind see, the lame to walk and curing patients of their diseases. The dead came to life, the poor became rich ; and oil-cake was turned into a lump of gold. He could walk on the Ganges with wooden sandles only, The spiritual guide is known as 'Mahasay' ; and the disciple as 'Barati'. They meditate on the mystic word, and practise love. With the development of purity, one can attain the highest goal. Lakhs of people follow this path,

but most of them come from the lower class of society and cannot attain a high level of culture and are degenerate.

(8) Kamadenni :—They are a sub-section of both the Ramayat and the Nimayat groups. They wear red cloth, a long loose shirt, a cap, and use a kind of carrier called the Kamadenni hanging from the shoulder and they tie a belt round the waist. The carrier consists of two baskets tied with a rope, one having the mark of a cow and the other that of Hanuman. Whatever they get by begging they keep inside the baskets. They worship the carrier twice, both morning and evening, with mystic words. They do not go from house to house while begging but utter the wood 'Dhanusdhari Ram'. On hearing their voice the householders give them alms. The serving and feeding of Vaishnavas is a very important act among them.

(9) **Kalingi** :—They are low class people embracing Vaishnavism. They live in Orissa and do not burn their dead bodies. They are householders and make disciples from low class people.

(10) **Kishori bhajan** :—Vikrama Kalachand Vidyalankar was the founder of this sect. According to them liberation is attained by

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imitating the acts of Sri Krishna. They do not admit the necessity of going to places of pilgrimage. Man is regarded as Krishna, and woman as Radha. Kishori (Radha) is considered as the first cause or power. The worship of women as Kishori and the taking of food offered to the dety is a custom prevalent among them. Whenever they are initiated they are initiated at night in pair, and they worship generally at night. They do not admit the superiority of caste, and they live in East Bengal. They utter the name of Gouranga. High class people are rare in their sect.

(11) **Kuda panthi** :—Tulsidas, a blind trader of the district of Agra was the founder of this sect. They do not admit either the distinction of caste or the necessity of image worship. All of them take food from one kunda (a kind of pot). At night the pair take from the same plate.

They meditate on God without attributes. They have a high regard for their spiritual guides.

They have some scriptures e. g. *Ghat Ramayana*, said to be written by Tulsidas. Their customs and manners are like those of the Sahajia and Kartabhaja sects.

(12) **Khusi bishwashi** :—Khusi bishwas, a Mohamedan inhabitant of the village of Vanga in Krishnanagar was the founder of this sect. They take the name of Gourangadeva. They do not worship God with attributes. Their customs are similar to those of the Sahajia sect.

(13) **Giri** :—They are Vaisnavas of the Goudiya sect. The degenerated Sanyasins embracing Vaisnavism are known as Giri. They are householders. Some take to cultivation as their profession, and some live on charity from their disciples.

(14) **Gurudasi** :—They are householder Vaisnavas of Orissa. Some low class people of Utkal initiated by the head of the monastery join this sect. They are householders. Fishing, cultivation, gardening etc. are their profession ; other Vaisnavas do not give equal status to this sect.

(15) **Gobrai** :—A Mohamedan named Gobrai of Muradpur was the founder of this sect. Their customs are like those of the Sahajia sect.

(16) **Charandasi** :—Charandas, a trader of Delhi was the founder of this sect which originated during the reign of Alamgir II. They are worshippers of Radha and Krishna, put on the

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sectarian mark and other imprints. They have their Gadi at Delhi.

According to them Sri Krishna is the God of creation, preservation and dissolution. He manifests Himself as the universe. They do not lay much stress on devotion and on the grace of the spiritual guide but they admit the utility of good karma or action. It is clasified under (1) Vihita karma eg., the company of good souls, prayer to Hari, devotion to the spiritual guide etc., and (2) Nisiddha karma eg., falsehood, abuse, haughtiness, stealing, jealuosy, injury, egoism, etc. They have both householders and monks among them. The latter wear yellow cloth, a small cap on the head, put on tilak on the forehead and use garlands of tulsi beads. The householders are mostly businessmen. The *Bhagavat* and the *Bhagavad Gita* are the religious books of this sect. Besides these they have other books also such as the *Bhasa vivaran*, *Sandeha Sagar*, *Dharma Jahaz* and some poems.

(17) **Chuhar panthi** :—This sect seems to be of recent origin. It is a sub section of the Vallabhacharya group. A trader of Agra is said to be the founder of this sect. Nathji, a famous deity of Guzerat, is the object of their worship.

They always utter the name of Lord Krishna and sing His praise. Both men and women dance in the name of the Lord. They do not admit the distinction of caste.

(18) **Churadhari** :—They are a sub section of the Goudiya Vaisnavas. They wear a crest on the top of the head as is seen in the image of Gopal (Krishna). They generally live in the district of Mymensingh in East Bengal. Their customs and manners bear resemblance with those of real Vaisnavas.

(19) **Jagamohini** :—Jagatmohan Goswami who is said to have been initiated by a Utkal Vaishnava was the founder of this sect, perhaps during the Muslim period. His line is known as the guru sect in East Bengal. There are both monks and householders as members of this sect. They do not accept image worship; but they consider the spiritual guide as the representative of God. They have no literature; but they have beautiful religious songs.

(20) **Tengalai** :—Vedanta Desikan, the famous philosopher of Conjeeveram, classifies the Vaisnavas under two heads (1) Vadagalai (the northern school) and (2) Tengalai (the southern school). Pillai Locachary, the author of eighteen works called, Rahasya, is the chief

representative of the Tengalais. They differ from Ramanuja in some respects. They accept the Tamil Prabandham as canonical and are indifferent to Sanskrit tradition. They hold that God enjoys sin ; for it gives a larger scope for the display of His grace, as did Christ who 'regarded sin and suffering as being in themselves beautiful holy things and modes of perception (c/o Oscar Wildes' De profundis). They brand their forehead with a special mark called Sinhasan. There is another school called the Vadgalai. The quarrel between the two sects about the religious doctrines and the from of the Tilak to be worn has existed for a long time. The Tengalais wear the tilak with a pada ; the Vadagalais without it.

(21) **Darbesh** :—Sanatan Goswami is said to be the founder of this sect. It is said that he fled from the service of the king of Gour in the disguise of a Dervish or Fakir. So the sect goes by his name. Their costoms and manners are like those of the Bauls and Nyaras. They are a mixture of the Baul and Nyara sects. They always utter the name of God and call Him 'Dindaradi,' (sympathiser of the poor). This sect is said to have originated from a mixture of both the Hindu and Mahomedan

religions. They take the name of Hari, Gour, Nitai, Khuda, Allah and sing their praises.

(22) Naga :—They are a subsect of the Ramayat group. They are quarrelsome, ill-tempered and move with arms.

(23) Niranjani :—Niranjan Swami was the founder of this sect. Like the Ramayat group they worship God with attributes. They are indifferent and are worshippers of Ram, Sita and other images of God.

They have many temples in Marwar. They worship God with devotion. Their speciality is that they take food from Brahmins and Kshatriyas etc. This is not liked by the Ramanandi sect. Their customs and manners are similar to those of other Vaisnavas.

(24) Nyara :—According to some, Virabhadra, the son of Nityananda, was the founder of this group. But some doubt it and hold that it is a subsect of the Baul group. They are worshippers of Prakriti. According to them Radha and Krishna exist in the human body. Fasting is not necessary as it causes affliction of the soul. They wear on the arm a ring of either iron or copper, wear a loin cloth, put on the Tilak, a garland of a special kind of shining stones, grow beard and moustache,

besmear oil on the body, wear a long loose shirt, travel with a begging bowl, a stick and a cocoanut shell, and take the name of Gouranga.

(25) Panthadasi :—Panthadas was the founder of this group. They belong to the Ramayat group, wear garlands of Tulsi beads, put on the sectarian mark, admit the existence of incarnation, and take the name of Ram. They have their Gadi at Ahirola and at Bhorkuri near Benaras. On a great festival day held during Ramanavami on the bank of the river Sarayu they assemble to show great respect to the Gadi there. Many house-holders of this sect live in Ayodhya, Nepal and Lucknow.

(26) Matukdhari :—They wear a crest called Matuk when they go out for begging, and take the name of Ram or Krishna. They beg standing at some particular place ; going from door to door is forbidden. They live mainly in the northern part of India.

(27) Mahapurushi :—Sankara deva is the founder of this group. They worship the Bhagavat, and sing loudly the name of Ram or Krishna. They live generally in Assam and Cooch Behar where they have a large following. It is said that Sankaradeva, a learned Kaystha

of Alipukuri in Assam, was initiated by Mahaprabhu. He preached his guru's doctrine in Assam to all high or low in society. He was opposed to image worship, and he accepted disciples from both the Hindus and the Muslims. If a Sudra comes to be in charge of any monastery, he has the right to initiate even Brahmins. There are two Akharas or Gadis, one at Bardowa near Nowgong, and the other at Barpeta near Gauhati. They assemble at Namaghar (temple) everyday, read their scripture, worship, sing and dance in the name of God. The Udasin section is known as Kebalia. Though Sankaradeva did not support image worship it should not be held that his supporters hate it, as some even observe 'Dole' and 'Durga puja.' They regard him as an incarnation of divinity and put offerings at his foot prints. There are some books such as the *Lilamala*, *Kirtana* songs, and the *Namaghosa Ratnavali* composed by Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva. They are written in a mixture of Braja (Brindavan) and Assamese.

(28) Margi :—They are subsections of the Ramanandi group. They are householders and live near Dwaraka, Girnar. They follow the path (marga) prescribed in a book found after

the death of a Vaisnava on his way to some holy place. Some take to cultivation, and others to trade as a profession.

(29) Mirabai :—They are a section of the Vallabhavacharya group. The only difference is that they have a special regard for Mirabai and her chosen deity Ranchor (a form of Sri Krishna). The devotional songs composed and sung with fervour by her have found a place in the mode of worship of the Kabir and Nanak sects who believe in the oneness of God. Though she was born of a royal family and was married to the Rana (king) of Udaipur, she had to leave the palace, under untoward circumstances, and go to Dwarka and Brindaban to lead a life of purity and devotion to her chosen deity.

(30) Ratívikhari :—They are a kind of beggar Vaisnavas living at Sri Rampur, Baidyabati in Bengal. They have a peculiar custom of begging at night from the fifth day of the moon till the full moon day. They do not accept any form.

(31) Radhaballavi :—Haribansa Goswami was the founder of this group. In 1641 Sambat, a math of this sect was established at Brindaban. Radha is the deity of their worship. They have

their books such as the Seva Sakhibani and others written in Vraja (Brindaban) dialect, dealing with their method of prayer and action etc.

(32) **Vadagalai** :—They are a subsection of the Ramanuja group. They live in Madras and Bombay presidency. Vedanta Desikan, the famous learned soul of Conjeeveram, was the founder of the northern school. They have a very high culture. Along with Vishnu they accept Vishnu Sakti (Laksmi) who is forgiveness personified. They accept both the Tamil Prabandam and the Sanskrit tradition.

(33) Baul :—They are a section of the Bengal Vaisnavas. Their customs and manners differ from those of other Vaisnavas. Radha and Krishna are the objects of their worship. They worship in secret which others cannot know. Sri Chaitanya is said to be the founder of this sect ; but who practically preached it, is not known. They believe that Radha and Krishna live in pairs in the human body; so also do the Sun, Moon, fire, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswar, Vaikunta, Brindaban etc. which also exist in this body. Seeking the chosen deity in other places, except in the body, is useless. Love of God within the body is their main sadhana.

They keep Prakriti (woman) as an aid. Degeneration is prevalent among them. They put on the sectarian mark on the forehead, wear a garland inserted either with a crystal or a lotus seed or a rosary. They wear a loin cloth, an upper cloth, and alkhala (a long shirt) and keep a bovl (pot), a stick and cocoanut shell when they go out for begging. They do not shave, grow beard, and salute each other when they meet. The worship of image, and fasting are unnecessary. Anybody violating the custom is condemned. The *Braja upasana tatva*, *Nayika siddhi* and *Rangamayeekana* are their scriptures in Bengali. In their numerous songs there are indications of spiritual practices which cannot be understood. Some of them are known as Kshepa.

(34) Vital Bhakta :—Pundalika is the founder of this sect. The other name for this sect is Vaisnavabhir. The followers of this sect generally live in Maharastra, Guzerat, Canara and central India. Vitova or Vishnu or Panduranga, the deity of their worship, is considered as the ninth incarnation of God. They have their Gadi at Pandarpur. The *Hari vijay*, *Bhakti vijay*, and *Pandurangamahatya* are the most authoritative books of this sect dealing with their doctrine, manners and customs.

Though renunciation of household life is not their essential object, there are some among them who renounce all. They wear yellow coloured cloth and roam with a flag of this colour. Like the Vaisnava sects they put on a sectarian mark consisting of two white spots on the forehead. It is said that they do not have very high regard for the Vedas and the Brahmins, as the Hindus have. They do not observe the distinction of caste strictly, and have no objection to take food from others. Like the Buddhists and Jains, they have very high regard for the footprints of their noble souls. Perhaps they have imbibed some of the influence of the Budhists and the Jains.

(35) Vaisnava Tapasi :—They cover their loin with bark of wood.

(36) Vaisnava Dandi :—They are of the Ramanuja group and are Brahmins. They keep a staff, and wear orange coloured cloth. Vishnu is the object of their worship. They lead a very pure life and study the Vedas.

(37) Brahman Vaisnava :—Utkal Brahmins embracing Vaisnavism fall under this category. Some maintain their sacred thread, some give it up and put on the sectarian mark. They

differ from the Bengal Vaisnavas in their customs and manners.

(38) Virakat :—In Utkal the Udasin Vaisnavas living in a monastery and remaining engaged in the service of the Vigraha or image are known as Virakat.

(39) Spastadayak :—This sect differs from other Hindu sects in two respects. Firstly, they do not accept the divinity of the spiritual guide and his sovereign power. Secondly, the men and the women live together like brothers and sisters in the monastery, sing and dance in the name of Krishna. None but the Udasin or Udasini is entitled to become the spiritual guide. They put on the kantika. The sectarian mark on the forehead is slightly smaller than that of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The men wear a loin and an upper cloth;the women shave their head and keep a tuft of hair. The orthodox persons of the sect do not take food from persons other than their own.

(40) Sahebdhani :—Perhaps this is a sub-sect of the Kartabhaja group. Sahebdhani, an udasin forest dweller of Saligram in the district of Krishnanagar, Bengal, well known for his compassion and devotion to God, was the founder of this sect ; but a cowherd named Dukhirampal

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who was the main preacher of this sect became very famous by organising the whole sect. They do not worship any image, rather condemn it. The place of their worship is called Asana which is nothing but a stool. Every Thursday they place a garland on it, offer rice boild in milk along with other offerings, put the offered food into each other's mouth and sing the glory of God. This process is called Paramartha Sadhan.

(41) Saai :—They are like the Darbesh sect, with the only difference that they take food from the hands of Muslims and other classes, drink wine, take beef and do such actions which are repulsive and are not liked by the others.

(42) Balarami :—This sect was founded by one Balarami Hondi, a very low class man of Meherpur in Nadia district. One day, when he was accused of the theft of ornaments from his master's house, he fled in the guise of an udasin and he founded a sect which goes by his name. His followers believed him to be Ram incarnated, and worship him on the Dol festival with flowers and saffron. They do not observe the distinction of caste. Most of his followers are householders and very few are udasins.

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They are classified under two sub-sects. They have no literature.

(43) Hazrati :—A Mohammedan named Hazrat founded this sect at Banbania near Ghosepara. Their customs are similar to those of the Kartabhaja sect. Hospitality to guests is the special characteristic of this sect.

(44) Pagalnathi :—This is a sub-sect started by one Pagalnath, a Mohammedan devotee of Nagda.

(45) Tilakdasi :—This sect was founded by one Sadgopa of Muradpur. In the early part of his life, he belonged to the Kartabhaja sect; afterwards he declared himself to be the incarnation of Vishnu and Siva. On the Dol festival he used to fill a basket with brinjals, put saffron on his own body and on the brinjals ,and sit near by.

(46) Darpanarayani :—This sect was founded by one Darpanarayan, a chamar (shoemaker) of Santipur. Like the Vedantins, he believed in the identity of the individual soul with the Absolute.

(47) Sakhibhavak :—This sub-sect of the Radha Krishna group claims its origin from Mahaprabhu who is considered as Radha mad for her husband Sri Krishna. They wear a

peculiar female dress, put on ornaments and grow hair like women. They consider themselves as the female attendants of Sri Krishna, who are fourteen in number ; and they serve Him as their husband and sing his praise. They live in Jaipur, Benaras and Bengal.

(48) Harishchandi :—This sect was founded by a very low class Dom in West India, who, it is said, instructed King Harischandra on religion when he was a slave in his house.

(49) Sadna panthi :—This sect was founded by one Sadna, a meat-seller, who worshipped God in a Salagram sila (a kind of stone said to be the emblem of Vishnu) given by an udasin. Pleased at his devotion, God fulfilled his desires.

(50) Madhavi :—This sect is said to have been founded by Madho, an udasin who used to sing the praise of God with his instrument called Balian. Some say that Madhodas of Kanyakubja, who was a follower of Mahaprabhu, well versed in scriptures, and who lived in Brindaban and sometimes at Utkal, was perhaps identical with the founder of this sect.

(51) Sanyogi :—Those Vaisnavas who marry, and live with family and children are known as Sanyogis. They are degenerated and

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are hated by others. The Vairagis do not take food with them in the same line.

(52) Bhaat :—This is a sub-sect of the Ramanuja group. Like the Sannyasin Bhaat they keep a chronology of the Vaisnava sects. They are worshippers of Vishnu.

(53) Haribola :—This sect is called Haribola because they constantly utter the name of Hari and think of their Guru, whose body, they consider to be the body of Lord Hari. They do not use beads for counting the number while praying to God. They have no literature. They instal the image of Sri Krishna or the pair, of Krishna and Radha, in Akhara, offer food before the deity and take it. Both udasins and householders may become the spiritual guide, who is known as Goswami. The system of Harir loot or Hari Sankirtana (singing the name of Hari in a body with khol or drum, kartal or cymbal etc.,) which is prevalent in Bengal was perhaps introduced by this sect.

(54) Bindudhari :—This sect consists of a mixture of Brahmins along with some low castes such as Khandait, karmakar etc. The low caste Bindudhari Vaisnavas wear a loin cloth and dress like the Vaisnavas and go out for begging and sometimes on pilgrimage. Afterwards they

are allowed to worship the deity, become fit to initiate and make disciples among all classes. The Brahmin Bindudharis differ from them in their customs and manners. They need not go on pilgrimages. They do not take food from people other than their own sect. After the death of a person, they burn the dead body, cook food, offer it in his honour, plant Tulsi at the place of burning, keep an umbrella on it and a fan in honour of the departed. On the death of some respectable person his ashes are brought, interred and worshipped daily.

(55) Kabiraji :—Rup Kabiraj, a poet, is said to be the founder of this sect. According to tradition, they use one Kanti only ; because, of the three Kantis used by the Vaisnavas, two were snatched away from the founder of this sect by his guru due to some dishonour shown to his wife. They are gentle, well behaved, and do not take food cooked by others.

(56) Satkuli :—This sect is prevalent in Utkal. They take food only from persons of their own sect.

(57) Anantakuli :—They are Utkal Vaisnavas differing from the Satkuli sect in their customs and manners. They are antagonistic to each other.

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(58) Yogi :—They are Dasnami Sanyasins embracing Vaisdnavism and remaining unmarried. Some of them live in Jessore, but the Vaisnavas living in Utkal are householders and live by begging.

(59) Abhyagata :—The Udasin Vaisnavas in Utkal, wandering from monastery to monastery without staying in any place, are known as Abhyagata Vaisnavas.

(60) Nihanga Vaisnava :—The Udasin Vaisnavas in Utkal who live in a monastery, arrange the seva of the image in it, and go out for begging in the day time belong to this sect. They are highly respected. They do not accept rice, atta, etc. like the others. After the death of any Nihanga Vaisnava, his body is cremated in the monastery by his disciples. They build an altar on it, plant Tulsi and pour water.

(61) Chamar Vaisnava :—They are low class Vaisnavas in Utkal coming from the Chamar caste (shoemaker). They are initiated by the head of the monastery.

(62) Farari :—The Vaisnavas who live on fruits only.

(63) Dudahari :—The Vaisnavas who live only on milk.

(64) Katia :—The Vaisnavas who practise

austerity. They tie a wooden piece round the waist.

(65) Lohia :—The Vaisnavas who put a 'zinzir', a kind of iron chain round the waist tied with a rope made of Munja (a kind of grass).

(66) Harivyasi :—They are Vaisnavas of the Nimait group living in North India with sectarian marks like the Ramayaits, with the only difference that 'Sri' the middle portion of the tilak on the forehead is marked with black earth instead of red colour. It is called 'Sinhasan'.

(67) Panchadhuni :—The Vaisnavas of this sect make five 'dhunis' i. e. keep fire in five places (sometimes eighty four) and sit within the circle of fire to practise austerity.

(68) Achari :—This is a branch of the Ramanuja cult coming from the Acharya's (teacher's) line. They worship Vishnu and make the emblems of conch, disc, club, and lotus on the body. They come from the Brahmin sect and are very intelligent and are highly cultured. They live in South India. The sectarain mark on the middle portion of the forehead is red. There are both Udasins and householders among them. They never

take food from the hands of others. They have very big temples and monasteries in South India, and in Utkal.

(69) Tahalia :—The Vaisnavas of this sect sing the praise of God and beg from door to door in the morning in the months of Vaisak, Kartik, and Magh specially.

(70) Manabhavi :—This sect is said to have been founded by one Krishnavat of Devagiri who is regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu. They have much regard for their religious books such as the *Krishnacharitamrita, Gita* and *Lilamritasindhu*, all in Sanskrit. They keep their practice secret. Non-injury is their main tenet. They take food together. They keep a begging bowl while begging. They do not burn their dead body, but bury it in the grave with plenty of salt round the body.

(71) Kuligain :—One Srinivasachary is said to be the founder of this sect. When they go out for begging, they go in a body, whether it is at nights or by day time.

(72) Nareshpathi ;—One Naresh Chandra Bhattachary, a learned scholar of the village of Jando in Burdwan, is said to be the founder of this sect. At first he was a Sakta but afterwards he embraced Vaisnavism. This sect is

liberal, does not observe the distinction of caste, considers Naresh chandra as the guide and keeps a place in honour of him at the samaj i. e. in the prayer hall. According to them it is not necessary to give up the sacred thread. They are opposed to child marriage, but not so much opposed to widow re-marriage. A great festival is held to honour of the founder, in the month of Baisak. They sing at the time of prayer. The founder of this sect is said to have brought about a reconciliation between the Saktas and the Vaisnavas.

(73) Satnami :—One Jagajibandas, a Kshatriya of Sardah village in Lucknow, is said to be the founder of this sect. He lived during the time of Nawab Asafudulla. They call God as Satnami ; hence the sect is known by that name. They have their Gadi at Baisvara, Taloi, Harchandrapur, Umapur and Katwa, all in Lucknow. On the occasion of the Kundasnan festival held in the month of Baisak and Kartik they assemble at Katwa and worship. The *Jnanprakash*, the *Mahapralay* and the *Pratham Grantha* are some of their books, written by the founder in Hindi. They claim themselves to be the worshippers of the attributeless God, and like the Vedantins they admit the one-

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ness of the individual with God. Like the Bauls they consider the body as the universe. There are both monks and householders among them. The householders live in Nepal, Benares, Cawnpore, Muttra, Delhi, Ayodhya, Multan, Hyderabad, and Guzerat, and are divided into Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya etc. The monks do not beg but live on the support of the householder devotees. Their title is 'Das' or 'Saheb'. When any one dies, they observe mourning and perform the 'Sradh ceremony'. They have a special regard for Hanuman and revere the name of Ram. They wear silk cloth, put on a long red shirt called Alpi, a red cap on the head, wear Dhaga on the hand, and put on the sectarian mark with ashes. Some grow hair and beard and shave the head.

(74) Swami Narayani :—This sect is said to have been founded by both Swami (a Brahmin) and Narayana (a chamar or shoemaker), on the basis of a book collected by the said chamar after the death of a Vaisnava who happened to be at his place on some occassion. They have their temples at Ahmedabad, at Junagardh, and at Bhavanagar where they assemble for the festival held in the month of Kartik, Falgoon, Chaitra and Jaistha. They are householders.

The worship of the said book is the most important function. They put the book on a stool, offer flowers sandal paste, sweets, betel leaves etc, and sing songs composed by Tulsidas, Surdas and others. Their belief is that Swami Narayan is an incarnation of the Lord. They utter the name repeatedly even when they carry their dead body to the cremation ground.

(75) Vaisnava Brahmachari :—Brahmacharins are clssified under three heads (1) Bala Brahmachari (Brahmins renouncing the world in unmarried stage) (2) Vridha Brahmachari (Brahmins practising Brahmacharya some time after marriage) and (3) Kula Brahmachari (Brahmins practising continence even in the married life according to the sanction of the scripture). Brahmins whose deity is Vishnu, who accept the Vaisnava customs, and are initiated with special paraphernalia are known as the Vaisnava Brahmachari. The life of renunciation is the second life as it were. In this stage one has to renounce one's old name, and lineage, and assume the name given by the the spiritual guide. One is then counted as belonging to the Achyuta lineage.

(76) Vaisnava Paranhansa :—The Vaisnavas who behave like Paramhasas after initiation

into the Vaisnava order are known as Vaisnava Paramahansas. They consider themselves as identical with Vishnu, just as the Saiva Paramahansas think that they are one with Siva. The *Patal* and the *Padhati*, the scriptures the sect, deal with the method of their worship, their modes of living and their duties. They do not put on the Tilak and Kanti, garland etc. Some grow matted hair. They do not observe rigourous rules. Others shave their heads like the Saiva Paramahamsas. They do not cook their own food and do not take food from persons other than the Brahmins. Their object is to obtain that kind of liberation as is prescribed in their scripture.

There are also sects founded by the Vaisnavas of Muttra and Brindaban. They are named as Radhanami, Radhipali, Behariji, Govindji, Juga Bhakta etc. Besides these, there are also other sects such as the Ramballavi, Ramsadania, Khandait, Vaisnava, Karan, Golakdasi, Dariadasi, Vaisnava Bhaat, Gopa Vaisnava, Bijmargi Chaturbhuji, Ramtiram etc. whose customs and manners cannot be known definitely.

THE END.

ERRATA

PAGE	LINE	READ	IN PLACE OF
9	6	Sankarsana	Sankarssna
9	16	Airsvarya	Aisaraya
13	23	1017	1027
16	27		
19	21		
26	10		
49	2	rigorous	rigourous
82	5		
21	11	Chopai	Chopal
21	23	form	from
22	9	Hansa	Hanse
28	3	Upanishads	Vpanishads
30	26	devotion	devtion
36	11	form	from
36	15	with	whith
36	25	Niyanta	Niyunta
37	22		
44	1	Bheda bhedvad	Bedabedvad
38	1		
38	1	Known	Know
39	5	(V) Sri Gouranga sect	Sri Gouranga. sect
44	25	Muktacharit	Mvktacharit

PAGE	LINE	READ	IN PLACE OF
45	12	Swarup	Sarup
46	18	Gourdwipika	Gourduripika
46	20	first	frist
47	4	pandit and Sankar	pandit sankar
48	27	among	amoug
55	1	grow beard	grow a beard
57	3	degenerated	degenerate
57	19	Vaisnavas	Vaishnavas
57	21	Vaisnavism	Vaishnavism
58	7	deity	dety
60	8	Classified	clasified
61	14	Vaishnava	Vaishnava
62	13	form	from
62	20	Darvesh	Dervish
62	21	customs	costoms
63	2	Khoda	Khuda
68	7	boul	bovl
71	18	Handi	Hondi
76	2	Vaisnavism	Vaisdnavism
76	12	Seva (worship)	Seva
78	23	Nareshpanthi.	Nareshpathi
79	8	in	to
81	10	classified	clsified
81	26 27	Paramhamsa	Paramhansas
82	2 4	Paramhamsas	Paramhansas
82	5	scriptures of the sect	scriptures the sect

THE SAIVA SECTS

BY

SWAMI TATTWANANDA

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INTRODUCTION.

This book is a collection of materials available about the Saiva sects of India which are widely scattered all over the country and even abroad. This will remove, to a very considerable extent, the misconception that India is the land of heathenism and that her people are gross idolators. The history of Indian civilization which is but the 'progressive reading of spirit into matter', proves the contrary of it. A great western savant says that they (the Hindus) are the least materialistic. The conception of the infinite concretised through the finite resulted in the growth of symbolism in India from very ancient times. The worship of the Absolute through the Linga (form of Siva) which was prevalent more or less throughout the country and even abroad, is one of such instances. Berth, in his work the "*Religion of India*" P. 262, remarks, 'It is nevertheless true that the choice of this symbol to the exclusion of other images was a sort of protest against idolatry.'

Most educated men are familiar with the main Saiva cult, but few are aware of the divisions and sub-divisions into which this order has expressed itself. This pioneer work consisting of the investigation of forty seven sects, big and small, with their secret affiliations in some form or other, to the main sect, and the origin, nature, form, mode of worship, literature and philosophy of the sect speaking of the depth of their culture, has a very great value from the point of view of religion as well as from the point of view of sociology.

THE SAIVA SECTS OF INDIA

The Hindus of India are the most progressive people with a very rich tradition. Founded on the attainment of the object of life which is peace between religions, races and classes, in all spheres, and not as some people believe, upon the absence of any armed conflict their traditional love is the expression of the mind which builds, with great endeavour and wide outlook, the glorious edifice of religion. India cannot afford to neglect it. It is embodied in her institution. This implies organic change in the structure of her society, and calls for the reconstruction of the whole civilization of her people and their life, their political machinery and spiritual aspirations.

The contents of the Hindu faith are built on the fundamental truths of life, existence, soul, nature and God. They have come down to us through the scriptures from the very ancient days of the Rig Veda, the earliest religious literature, not only of the Hindus but also of the world. They have been amplified and elucidated through thousands of years by the later scriptures. The verification of these truths by the realisation of the seers of every age has augmented their glory. The findings of the sages revealing the eternal nature of these truths have come down to us, through heredity, as the eternal religion. It is called the Sanatan Dharma.

The unalterable nature of the truths gave India strength to withstand grave disasters-political, social, religious and cultural. Her spiritual acquisitions supplied energy to increase her vitality. The solid structure of her society has lasted for many centuries. It has not been affected to any appreciable extent by the invasion, colonisation and domination of various alien races. It is said, 'Though she (India) lost her political freedom she was never conquered ; she retained her intellectual empire ; her soul was never subdued'.

Unlike the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans whose material progress and culture in various fields of science, philosophy, religion and literature brought for those great nations of the world a vast kingdom, abundant wealth, glory and prestige, the Hindus have not changed much in their cultural outlook which, in its essential distinctive character, is the product of their own. There have been changes no doubt; but they are not beyond recognition. Their conduct is still regulated by the scriptures as in the days of old. Neither ignorance nor foolishly sticking to the phase of medievalism makes them forsake it.

The cause for the attainment of such a noble culture is found in her 'universal receptivity' and wonderful synthesis issuing from the solid rock of her spirituality. Her success in living through milleniums lies in her rigidity with regard to fundamentals, and in her elasticity in readjusting externals according to the demand of the changed circumstances. The love of this culture makes her stick to antiquity. Her power of adaptability is another reason for this solidarity.

Whenever the structure suffers and tears, fortunately some great souls in the shape of Avataras and Acharyas appear to give a fresh lease of life by repairing and remodelling it.

The Hindus are condemned for their negligence in the persuit of material progress. This pessimism is only apparent. Swami Vivekananda says, "Our national religion seeks to win no material triumphs. Its purposes are Spiritual. Its weapon is truth which is hidden away from material eyes and yields to reflective reason." The belief in the eternal truths such as the immanance of God and the divinity of the soul guides their conduct. They believe that though men commit mistakes through ignorance for which they suffer here and hereafter, they are not condemned as sinners. Like the sages who had a past, all sinners have a future. They have within them the potentiality of becoming divine in all its bearing. They are treated with sympathy, and helped out of ignorance. Universal love born of purity and God vision, and the vision of unity in diversity give them power and strength to assimilate foreign elements to love people, to mix with them and raise their life and thoughts to a higher level. They are alive to the need of overhauling their society in the light of the fundamental requisities namely renunciation and service. This is surely a sign of life.

(1) Saivism as a phase of Hinduism

The Saiva cult is a phase of Hinduism. The system of thought developed therein offers its own theory of knowledge, interpretation of mind and nature of ethics and religion. The substance of its exposition is a revelation. A new light dawns on the mind of the earnest seekers of truth determined to take full advantage of it. It answers many queries, satisfies many doubts, solves many dfficulties and widens opportunities to carry out the lofty ideals of religion in practical life.

From a study of the religious history of the Hindus in India it is known that there are five main sects who have attained eminence. They are the Vaisnavas, the Saivas, the Saktas, the Souras and the Ganapatyas. The worshippers of Vishnu are the Vaisnavas, those of Siva the Saivas, those of Sakti (Mother) the Saktas, those of the Sun the Souras and those of Ganapathy the Ganapatyas. The Hindus believe in the Vedas, Smritis, Puranas, Tantras and other allied scriptures and never go against them. All their actions are guided by these authoritative scriptures. They are free to accept either Vishnu or Sakti or any God or Goddess as their chosen deity for meditation. Besides the Vedas and the like, other scriptures dealing with the growth of the sects along with their philosophy have developed very much, and their influence is very great upon the Hindus. Some seem to

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avoid orthodoxy. Though some do not agree with what is held by the orthodox, reject certain customs and manners and do not entertain very high respect for them, there is yet toleration for each other. It is the very basis of Hindusim. This basicsolidarity aiming at the unfoldment of the depth of spirituality, forms the most important factor in the growth of the big banian tree of Hinduism with its innumerable branches, twigs, foliage, leaves and fruits.

It is very difficult to ascertain the antiquity of Saivism. When this cult was reduced to a definite shape cannot be known. Some say the Vedic fire cult was replaced by Agamic worship of images in temples. The vedic God was incorporated in Agamic lore. Some hold the basic principles have been set forth in the Puranas and the Agamas. Besides the Puranas such as Vayu, Linga, and Kurma which speak of the glory of Siva, Saiva theism was expounded in the Agamas numbering 200 including the Upagamas which were composd before the 7th century A.D. Banabhatta of the 7th century A.D. refers to it while giving an account of the prominent religious sects of that time.

(2) The antiquity of the Saiva cult

From the study of the religious history of this sect it is known that the practice of worshippping Siva and Sakti was prevalent from very ancient times. The religious books such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the well known epics of India which establish the doctrine of the Vedas and other scriptures through concrete examples, are full of the glory of Siva, Sakti and Vishnu. Even the dramas such as the *Mrichakatika* by the dramatist Sudraka and the *Abhignana Sakuntala* by the great poet Kalidas, which are ancient literatures of great value, very *highly* appreciated even to-day by the great savants including those of the West, begin with a prayer to Siva who is described as the greatest power force. The *Kumara Sambhava*, the beautiful epic of the great talented poet, is but the description of the glory of Siva and his consort Gouri.

There are other authoritative records proving the existence of the worship of Siva from very ancient times. It was prevalent in India long before Sultan Muhumud's historical demolition of the Somnath temple in Guzerat, which took place in the 10th century. The inscription bearing the name and form of Siva on the

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coin (1) of that time, proves undoubtedly its antiquity. The Paintings describing the glorious actions of the Saiva kings for 1150 years from 671 A.D. to 2821 A.D., on the walls of the Siva temples on a hill in Sirohi country, West of Marwar in Rajputna, verify it.

(1) C/o H. H. Wilson's Ariana Antiqua Asiatic Researches, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

From the account of the great Chinese traveller Huen Tsang written in Chinese which has been recently translated into French by Stanislas Julius, the great French savant, it is known that the Chinese pilgrim during his pilgrimage to India in the 7th century A.D., acquired a vast knowledge of India and her people together with their customs, manners, religions, social and political conditions prevalent in the country. The descriptions of the Siva temples he saw at Kanoj, Karachi, Malwa, Gandhar (Kandahar) and specially at Benares where he was extremely charmed with twenty big temples and an apparently living image of Siva 66 cubit hands high, inspiring devotion and awe, prove that the worship of this benevolent deity was prevalent during that period and the culture of the country was at the height of its glory.

The account of Varahamihir, the famous astronomer, which was afterwards translated into Arabic by an Arabian author, describes the condition of the Hindus before Huen Tsang's arrival in India. It says that along with the worship of Krishna, the worship of Siva and other gods was in vogue in the country for a very long time.

The coins prevalent among the Gupta kings of Kanoj in the second century A.D., among the Sourastra kings of the fourth century A.D., and also among the Sakas, Jats and Hunas who reigned in the western part of Sind from the pre-christian period up to the sixth century A.D., bear the form of the trident, the bull (the vehicle of Lord Siva) and lion (the vehicle of Sakti, the power of Siva). Arian, the Greek author in the second century A.D., gives a very beautiful description of Kumari, the name given to the deity Kanya Kumari (the unmarried form of Durga) in South India (Madras State). Vikramaditya who introduced the Vikrama Sambat fifty-six years before the birth of Christ, writes an interesting story containing the glory of Siva and Sakti (Mother). Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to India in 327 B. C., in his account of Indian culture and religion, gives a beautiful description (1) of the prevalent worship of God, probably Siva, bearing similarity with the Wake' and Hercules festivals of Greece. The coins (2) of those periods mentioned above testify doubtless to the existence of such worship during that time. From the description of the above mentioned eminent writers it is evident that the worship of Siva was prevalent from that time and even earlier.

(1) C/o Tod's Rajasthan Vol. I Chap. II and V and also translations of the Royal Asiatic Society. Vol. III, article VI.

(2) C/o Ariana Antiqua by H. H. Wilson 1841 P 407-427 and also P 350.

The Pandya kings who, it is said, established their kingdom before the 5th or 6th century B.C., and one of whom sent an ambassador to the Roman emperor Augustus, as described (1) by Satrabo, the Greek writer, were also known to be worshippers of Siva.

(1) C/o W. Taylor's examination and analysis of the Mackenzie manuscript P 19, 131

The oldest Sutra Grantas (1) of the Buddhists said to be written after the death of Buddha depicting the worship of Siva, Narayan and other Puranic gods, and the *Rajatarangini*, the history of Kashmir which gives the description of Siva worship in the 7th century B.C., which deals with a period prior to the Jatakas, prove the antiquity of the system of such worship.

(1) C/o Introduction to the history of Buddhism by E. Burnoup P 131—132

(3) Siva worship in greater India

From all this evidence one is apt to believe that this system of worship was prevalent among the Hindus perhaps from the time of the introduction of worship through symbols. It did not confine itself to the boundary of India alone but extended also to countries far beyond. Hinglaz is a holy place of the Hindus even now frequented by the worshippers of Siva and Sakti. Ballydwip and Javadwip are the distant islands in the Indian Ocean where the Siva cult (1) is still prevalent. The influence of Siva, Sakti and other cults with their allied culture, and religion, are evident even to-day in their stone and brass images of Siva, Durga and Ganesh, and also in their language called 'Kabi' formed from a mixture of Sanskrit with the local language. All these point out distinctly to the fact that India established her cultural

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domination over the Colonies she came into contact.

(1) C/o. Crawford's history of Indian archipelago, 1820, VOL. II P. 236-268.

The prevalence of this cult is evident even now at the Himalayas in the North, Rameswar Sethubandha in the South, Hinglaz in the West and the Indian islands in the East.

Some scholars both foreign and Indian, interpret the religious customs of the Hindus without considering the rites and rituals as enjoined by the scriptures. These rituals aim at helping the aspirants to transcend all forms and realise in true perspective the findings of the seers. They reveal certain unalterable truths about life and existence, such as the divinity of the soul, the immanance of God in Nature and the identity of the soul with the Universal spirit. They help the gradual assimilation of these ideals and provide ample opportunity for intensifying such thoughts in an easy and interesting way. The essential constituents of religion consist of the prophets, mythology furnished with countless inspiring ideals culled from history, tradition and legends and of the scriptures governing the entire Hindu life. They recommend these for the spiritual advancement of the soul towards perfection. The secret urge of evolution too is to remove the veil of ignorance, bit by bit, by efforts for the unfoldment of the divinity lying concealed in the soul. But ordinary people cannot understand this. They do not go deep into the matter.

The gate to the mystery of the infinite remains closed to them. Some hold that primarily Siva was the god of the so called Non-Aryans who are detested by Vedic people, but in the course of time he penetrated into the heart of the people who wrote the hymns propitiating Him in glowing terms. Similarly in the beginning Vishnu was considered to be the god of the cultivators, fishermen, craftsmen, traders and others ; but afterwards was raised to the higher status and accepted by the Brahmanical sects. According to them the Siva cult is the blend of the two lines of development of the Aryan (Vedic) and pre-Aryan (non-vedic). It is not a single cult but a federation of cult.

Some even ascribe phallic association to it. Perhaps they base their origin from the use of cones used in his worship. The conception of the phallic cult arose out of the worship of cones, pillars and stones. The anecdotes of western Asiatic cones associated with the orgies of lust and stories written by various writers in those countries confirming such association, and the ancient customs and manners prevalent among the people there as well as among the Jews, perhaps enhanced the idea. The survey in India of the cults of the poles, cones, stones both Vedic, Saivait and Tantric, prove that they were primarily used as the seats of their respective deities. The utility of these was highly apprecitated by the Indian seers from very ancient times. The Supreme Spirit who is one undivided whole is beyond time, space and causation. The Changeless, Eternal, Infinite (C/Tai II, 1-3) is beyond the reach of the senses and cannot be limited by form or attributes (C/Brih, III 88). He is Transcendental. All that can be said of Him is 'neti' 'neti' (not this, not this c/Brih III, 9-26). Even men of very keen intellect cannot keep their mind pitched up for long on the thought of the Formless Lord of the Universe. But symbols representing God have great advantages. All the while when men worship in front of a symbol they think of God and of none else. The thought of the all pervading Holiness sanctifies their mind and purges it of evil propensities. The switching of their thoughts Godward is the greatest purifier and it comes very easily when they try to feel the divine presence through concrete forms. The abstract idea is instilled even in the crude mind with the help of concrete objects. The process of vitalising symbols through rituals helps the gradual assimilation of the idea of the divinity of the soul. This deification makes the aspirant ultimately feel that the physical entities are but the Absolute seen through different modes of Cosmic manifestation. In western Asia and in Jewish countries, too, probably the idea originated from the worship of God through symbolism which might have been afterwards misunderstood and misrepresented. Beth El was but a stone. The Hebrews believed it to be the house of God.

In ancient India this symbolism originated perhaps with the worship of the Sun who was conceived as representing birth, youth and death. The Sun on the Udayacala (sun rise) from the ocean of the sky represents the first, the sun setting on the Meru (central hill of the sky) the second, and on the hill Astacala (sunset) the third.

(5) Vestiges of Siva worship in Egypt and in Greece.

Siva Lingas or cones are also the residence of Siva like the Beth El or the house of God among the Hebrews which, as said before, was but a stone, and like the Vedic Yupas. The Yupas (1) are the shafts with eight corners, square at the bottom, oblong in the middle and cylindrical on the top. They are but the seats of the Vedic gods. Yupa is called Sthanu (2). Siva is also known as Sthanu and is identified with Vedic Rudra. The cones are associated not only with Siva alone but also with other Vedic gods such as Indra, Vayu, Agni, Nirrhti and the Dikpalas. The association of the Vedic gods with the Linga excludes all probability of its being ascribed to be a phallic emblem. All types of available lingas (3) are nothing but the seats of god Siva (Rudra) The lingas stand for the emblem of God, and this view is supported by the *Skanda Puran.* It says *Akasham Lingamithyahuh Prithibi tashya pithika, Alayah sarva devanam layanat lingamuchyate.'*

The subtle ether pervading the universe is said to be the linga (the symbol of the Absolute Being, the earth is His pedestal. He is the support of all gods. As the entire universe dissolves in Him. He is called Linga.) The ring stones available in some are but clamps, the faces in others are meant for receiving wooden pegs ; smooth surfaces in still others are meant for being used as capitals of wooden pillars. They are not Yoni (phallus) stones as interpreted by Marshall and others. The phallus association ascribed to it is nothing but a mis-interpretation.

(1) C/o Astasri Yupa bhavati Sat 5.2.1.5. also Rig-Ved. 3.8. 1-11.

(2) Sat. 3.6.2.5.

(3) (a) Natural and (b) artificial. (a) Swayambhu lingas and Vana lingas are natural. Peaks of natural rocks are Swayambhu lingas and natural pebbles of the river Narmada are Vana lingas.

(b) Temporary clay lingas, mukha lingas etc. are artificial.

From a thorough investigation of the mystery of symbolism prevalent in the country it is known that the prayer to the deity, like that of the Sun, as said before, has continued in some form or other from the Vedic times up to the present day. Neither the Yupas of the Vedic time nor the Dhwaja Stamba and pillars (found in front of most temples in South India) have any sex relation. These non-phallic pillars or poles are but the seats for the gods invoked, entirely free from sex connotation and unlinked with such association of western Asia. The rites and rituals associated with the sacred cones of Siva show that they are never used as sex emblems. The symbols of Sakti who is worshipped in the virgin and treated as the Divine Mother have also no such concern. The sexual excesses, as alleged by some western writers, are totally absent in the very conception, of it. Describing the significance of symbolism specially of the Linga, a great western savant says, 'Of all the representations which India imagined, the lingas are perhaps the least offensive to look at. They are the least materialistic. It is nevertheless true that the choice of this symbol to the exclusion of other images was a sort of protest against idolatry. (1) From this it is evident that phallucism as a cult was never practised in India and the phallic character cannot be proved from the form, rites and rituals of Siva worship.

(1) C/o Berth, Religion of India P. 262

The Linga Upasana or the worship of Siva through symbols was not confined to India alone. It existed in some form or other in other countries too. The worship of Osiris and Isis (the beloved consort) in Egypt bears contrast with that of Siva and Sakti in India. Like Bhagavati, the power of Siva, Isis the wife of Osiris is conceived to be of the nature of the universe.

Sakti Yantra (the mystic diagram used in India) which is triangular bears similarity with that of Isis. Like Siva, Osiris is the god of terror. Apis, the bull of Osiris, is honoured in a similar manner as the bull, the vehicle of Siva. Serpents form the ear ornaments of both, the trident of Siva is like the stick of Osiris, and the tiger skin of the former bears similarity with that (I) of Osiris. The image too is made of stone in Egypt. The leaves of the favourite tree of Osiris are like the Bilva leaves (three leaves in one stem) used invariably in the worship of Siva. Memphis, like the Benares of the Hindus in India, was the most favourite and sacred place of Osiris in Egypt. Milk is commonly used for Abiseka (bath) of both the deities, rather more in the case of Osiris which amounts to 360 pots daily, at File island. Perhaps the difference lies in the fact that Siva is decribed as one possessing white colour like silver, whereas Osiris is of black (2) colour ;

but on scrutiny it may be found that the difference is apparent and not real because the image of Mahakala is black.

(1) C/o diagram 33 of Wilkins's History of Ancient Egypt.

(2) C/o the description of god Osiris and goddess Isis by Plutarch and History of ancient Egypt by Wilkins.

The difference between the worship of the two deities of India and Egypt is also pointed out by another writer (1) of vast erudition. According to him the procession of God comes out and people drink on those occasions in Egypt whereas the custom of taking out procession is not prevalent in India ; but this does not seem to be a correct view. Very big processions come out during the festivals in South Indian temples. In Bengal, too, such processions come out during the month of Chaitra on Charak festival. The real difference lies in the fact that the people in India do not drink on those occasions, but lead a very pure life.

(1) C/o Vans Kennedy's researches into the nature and affinity of ancient Egypt and Hindu mythology P. 305

In Greece, too, similar Linga worship was prevalent and great festivals (1) were held with pomp and show. The people sacrificed an ass and offered wine on those occasions and sang songs accompanied by dance. (2) From the writings of Atheinius, a Greek writer, it is known that on the occasion of Wake festival they used to carry a big golden image (Linga). Among the Babylonians the people used to make a very big Linga (image) to worship. The old brass images found at Babylonia have similarity (3) with those of Siva in India. A similar form of worship was prevalent among the Romans too. An ancient historian has shown with authoritative proof that the custom was prevalent among the Christians and even now is prevalent in some form (4) or other among the Roman Catholics in Italy.

(1) C/o G. A. St. John's History of the manners and customs of ancient Greece. Vol. 1 P. 411.

(2) C/o Ibid Vol. II P. 240

(3) C/o The journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Vol. 1 P. 91-92.

(4) Moor's Oriental Fragments P. 117.

The early Christians in Egypt used to carry on their body an object called 'Tayo' similar to the Linga in India. In many Christian countries there are figures similar (I) to "Tayo". According to a savant, the last lingering of a very ancient rite, Phallic Lingaic or Ionian in Christendom............evidently shows close correspondence with the existing Hindu rites.

(1) C/o Wilkins's History Vol. II Page 283.

Every true religion is founded on the realisation of the ultimate truth. Spirituality is its basis. Literature keeps the strength of the foundation. No religion can maintain its purity long unless its essence is preserved in literature. Literature is the sheath and spirituality is the life within it.

(5) **Saiva Scriptures.**

Saivism has a vast literature. It accepts the most important triad consisting of Siva, Sakti and Nara.

For the sake of convenience the propagators of the scriptures divided, according to the nature of the form, modes and conception, the jurisdiction of the cult, under three zones. They are (1) *Vishnukranta* (2) *Rathakranta* and (3) *Aswakranta*. The country from the Vindhya hill to Chittagong in the east, falls under the first zone. The country from the same hill to greater China is under the second zone, and the country from the said hill to the ocean in the west falls under the third zone.

It explains the three different modes of the knowledge of Reality viz. non-dual (abheda), non-dual-cum-dual (bheda-bheda) and dual (bheda). Dealing with the nature of Reality and a way of life, it is classified under three heads *para*, *apara* and *paratpara* according to the works set forth respectively in the metaphysics, the rituals and both in the philosophy and practical discipline enjoined by the system. It is divided into three divisions (1) Agama sastra (2) Spanda sastra and (3) Pratyabhigna sastra.

(1) Agama sastra, the first of the three, is said to have been revealed to the sage Durvasa by Siva as Srikantha. Durvasa again ordered the three mind born sons Troyambaka, Amardaka and Srikantha to teach the eternal Saiva philosophy in its three aspects of *abheda*, *bheda* and *bhedabheda*. Many Agamas have attained importance from very ancient times. *Netra Matenga*, *Malini Vijaya*, *Mrigendra*, *Svacchanda*, and *Rudra Yamal* are some of them. Some Agamas teach a dualistic doctrine. There is another kind of Agama such as *Siva Sutra*

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also called *Sivopanisad Samgraha* or *Sivarahasyagama Samgraha.* It is said to have been revealed to Vasugupta in the 9th century ; it expounds purely Advaita Metaphysics. There is a vritti on this valuable book. *Vartika* by Bhaskari and a commentary called *Vimarsini* by Kshemraja are also available. Besides these there are many commentators on many Agamas. Uddyota on *Svacchanda, Netra, Vijnana Vairaba* and the *Vritti* on *Matanga* all endeavour to show that the Agamas existed even prior to Siva Sutra which taught the Advaita doctrine.

(2) *Spanda Sastra* also known as *Spanda Sutra* or *Spanda Karika* is attributed to Vasugupta who elaborated the principles of *Siva Sutra* without giving much reason in support of it. It is called *Samgraha Grantha* or compendium. With a vriti on it by Kallata, the two put to-gether is called *Spanda Sarvasa.* Besides these there are other books such as *Spanda Nirnaya, Spanda Sandoha* by Kshemaraja, the author of *Siva Sutra Vimarsini, Vivriti* by Ramkanta, and the *Pradipika* by Utpala Vaisnava.

(3) *Pratyavijna Sastra* by Sidha Somananda, the founder of the logic of the system deals with the philosophical aspect. There is a very important *Vriti* on the work Sivadristi by the

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author. *Pratyavijna Vimarsini*, *Brihati Vriti* *Paramarthasara*, *Tantrasara*, *Tantraloka* with Jayartha's commentary on it, all by Abhinavagupta, Pratyavijnaridaya by Kshemaraja and Pratyavijna Sutra by Utpala are veritable encyclopaedia of the system. *Bhaskari* is a lucid ,tika on Abhinava's commentary.

Besides this literature which developed very much in Kashmir, there are literatures of this system in Bengal, Assam, Nepal and Tibet which are extensive and complex. The Tantras such as *Mahanirvan*, *Yogini*, *Prantoshini*, *Meru* *Kamala*, *Vir*, *Kali*, *Gautamiya*, *Fetkarini*, *Todola*, *Kularnava*, *Kulasara*, *Rudra*, *Yamal*, *Brahma Yamal*, *Vishnu Yamal*, *Lingarchana*, *Siva* and so on, have attained much eminence. Besides these there are many valuable compilations such as *Tantrasara*, *Ananda Kalpa*, *Saktananda Tarangini*, *Shyamarchana* and others—all describing in glowing terms, the nature, form and glory of the cult. The influence of these extended to the Assam, Nepal and other places too. In the Tamil country Tirumular. composed the *Tirumandiram*. He is belived to be the earliest exponent of Saivism in Tamil land and his place in the history of Tamil Saivism is indeterminable. The devotional poems of the

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Nayanars (Saiva saints 63 in number) which brought a great upsurge of Saivism in South India are divided into eleven collections together with a Tamil purana called the *Periya Puranam.* The first seven collections are known as the *Thevaram* and are regarded as eqivalent to the Vedas and are sung with Vedic hymns in religious processions. They were composed in the 7th century A.D., by Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar. Tiruvacakam by Manikkavacagar occupies the most important place in Saiva literature. It depicts in beautiful hymns the progress of the soul from bondage to liberty through various stages such as wakening, joy, exaltation, waywardness, despondency, struggle, unrest, peace and the joy of union. It ultimately helps one to reach a stage when the distinction of the knower, knowledge and the known disappears in the intuiton of God. Regarding this literature, Sir Charles Eliot writes in '*Hinduism and Budhism*' Vol II P. 127, 'In no literature with which I am acquainted, has the individual religious life, its struggles and dejections, its hopes and fears, its confidence and its triumph, received a delineation more frank and more profound'.........The *Thevarams* and the *Tirumandiram of* Tirumuler which are masterpieces of poetic compositions reflect the Agamas. In the 13th and 14th centuries further development of Tamil Saivism gave rise to Saiva Sidhanta. The Lingaits also known as the Virasaivait sects founded by Basava, the prime minister of Bijjala flourished at the cost of Jainism and Buddhism in Mysore and Karnataka countries. Their influence caused the decay of the two powerful sects there.

The fundamental facts of Saivism, according to Dr. Das Gupta are composed of Vedantic monism and Samkhya. Nyaya doctrines have also been used sometimes. Pope's idea is that Saiva Siddhanta is the most elaborate, influential, and valuable of all the religions of India.

(6) The underlying philosophy of Saiva Agama.

The Agamic literature summarised in Sarvadarsana Samgraha is interesting and extensive. It contains philosophical thought, details of the cult, ritualism, discussion of architectural technique for the foundation of temples, mantram and details of worship. Some contain description of Saiva cult superseding the

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older Vedic form, some discuss the problems of creation, sustenance, and destruction, the veiling of the truth and ultimate liberation—all done by God Siva.

Siva-mahapurana said to be a work of Siva Himself, is condensed into 24000 verses by Vyasa *Vayaviya Samhita* is its last section written probably for the people adhering to *Varnasrama Dharma* and also for people who are not privileged to study the Vedas. It gives a monistic system of Saivism similar to the doctrine of Sankar. According to it plurality of appearance is false. Siva or Brahman is the only reality, false appearance is due to interference of nescience. There is no difference between cause and effect. It holds that at the time of the great dissolution there existed only the pure being, pure consciousness., infinite, and pure bliss, without any form or qualities. At the kindling of desire, the formless changed into form called Sadasiva, Isvar or God. From him *Pradhan, prakrity* or *maya, buddhi, gunas* (*Sattva, rajas, tamas*), *ahamkar,* the *tanmatras,* and the *bhutas* have emanated.

Siddhanta-sikhamani, a work of a Siva-yogin named Renukacarya of the 13th century elucidates the nature of Siva by consulting the Saiva tantras and the Puranas. According to it the qualities of Siva are of a transcendental nature (aprakrta). Its idea of Karma is similar to that of the Pasupatas. It seems to be influenced by *Pasupata*, *Vgama*, *Samkhya* and *Vedana* doctrines.

According to the *Vira-Saivagama*, a work of the 13th century, there are four schools e.g. *Saiva*, *Pasupata*, *Vama* and *Kula*. Saiva has two divisions. *Saumya* and *Raudra* and is called *Daksina*. The cult of *Sakti* is *Vama*. There is another sect, or to be more exact there are three schools of a sect called Daksina, Kalamukha and Mahavrata. The Siddhantas admit three sects e.g. Adi-Saiva, Maha-Saiva, and Anta-saiva. Saivism according to the Vira-saivagama is scattered into varieties of schools of thought and has a vast literature.

According to Gunaratna, there are eighteen avataras (incarnations) of Siva namely Nakulisa, Gargya, Isana and so on and there are four types of Saivas e.g., Saivas, Pasupatas, Mahavratadharas and Kalamukhas. Besides these other subdivisions also exist. The Naiyayikas are Saivas, and the Vaisesikas the Pasupatas. Their philosophical attitudes are similar to those of the Saivas according to him. Rajasekhara's description of the Saiva view corrobates it. He holds that Aksapada, the author of Nyaya sutra is the teacher of the Nyaya sect of the Pasupatas.

King Bhoja of Dhara who belonged to the 11th century A.D. wrote a work on Saiva philosophy called the Tattva-prakasa. It is based on Saivagama. Madhava of the 14th century wrote Sarva-darasana Sangraha in which Saivism is included. Umapati, a contemporary of Madhava and one of the teachers who elaborated the system of Saiva philosophy, says that the real intention of all the Vedas is summed up in three mystic words, pati, pasu and pasa, the Lord, the flock, and the bond. These are three categories of Saiva Siddhanta. These are eternal, existing unchanged and undiminished through the ages This doctrine is in opposition to the Charvaka school which does not admit the existence of any creator

According to Vatula-tantra, Siva may be distinguished in ten ways : (1) Tattva-bheda (2) Varna-bheda (3) Cakra-bheda (4) Varga-bheda (5) Mantra-bheda (6) Pranava (7) Brahma-bheda (8) Anga-bheda (9) Mantrajata and (10) Kila.

From the commentary of Siva-jnan-bodha of meykanda deva it is known that various schools of Saivism arose. They are classified under two main groups (i) Pasupata, Mavrata-vada (possibly

Mahavrata), Kapalika, Vama, Bhairava, Aiky vada(ii) Urdha-Saiva, Anadi-saiva, Adisaiva, Mahasaiva, Bheda-saiva, Abeeda-saiva, Anu-saiva, Kriya-saiva, Nalu-saiva and Suddha-saiva. Schomerus believes that they are more or less the same except the Pasupata, the Vira-saiva and Pratyabhijna·

From these facts it appears that the contribution of Saiva literature and their place is indeterminable.

(7) The Linga as symbol of the infinite.

According to the Purana the Linga is the best symbol of the infinite, whose bottom and top cannot be ascertained. The propagators of the scripture hold that it is of two kinds (a) Real and (b) Apparent. According to the Prantoshini Tantra, Swayambhu Linga and Vana Lingas which are not made by human beings and whose source cannot be traced, fall under the first category. They are also known as Jyoti Lingas. The number of Jyoti Lingas is twelve. They are at (1) Somanath at Sourastra, (2) Mallikarjuna at Sri Saila near the Krishna river, (3) Mahakala at Ujjain in Avantika (Maharastra) (4) Omkar at Omkareswar on the bank of the rivers Narmada and Kaveri

(5) Kedarnath on the Himalayas, (6) Vimasankar at Dakini near Rajamundri, Andra, (7) Viswanath at Banares, U.P., (8) Tryambakeswar on the bank of the river Gautami near Nasik, (9) Vaidyanath at Chitabhumi, Deoghar, Behar, (10) Nagesh at Darukabana, (11) Rameswar at Sethubandha, Ramnathpuram Dt. South India and (12) Ghusrinesha at Sivalay (probably Kailash, Elapore or Elora according to some). Of these Somnath, Mahakala and Visvanath temples were destroyed by Sultan Mahmud (1024), Altamash (1152) and Aurangzeb and rebuilt afterwards. The Lingas made by men are apparent. They may be of gold, silver, brass, copper, crystal, stone, earth, saffron, musk, Sandal, wheat, barley, paddy, sesamum, clarified butter, curd etc. Flower, incense, fruits, sweets, offerings, garlands etc., are the accessories by which the devotees worship Him with devotion. When the devotion becomes ripe, the mind pure free from all sin the aspirant reaches a state of bliss and attains peace in all spheres of life.

From a study of the rituals of God Siva, it is found that there are many types of Lingas in use. :—(1) Clay Siva Linga. :—It is made of clay obtained from a good place (preferably from the Ganges), two to three inches in height with a rim, a cylindrical head, a Vajra on the apex.

(2) Svayambhu Linga : — Svayambhu means one born of own wish. It is formed of the natural rocks untouched by hand or any instrument.

(3) Vana Linga : —It is the natural pebble rounded by friction and found in the river Narmada.

(4) Linga.- They have octagonal shafts but no pedestals.

(5) Portable Siva Linga : — They are made artificially with a pedestal called Gouripatta. They have three parts. The lowest part is square in shape and is called Brahmabhaga, the middle portion is octagonal and is called Vishnubhaga, and the top portion is cylindrical and is known as Rudrabhaga.

(6) Mukha Linga : — The characteristic of this linga is that the faces of Siva are carved on the sides.

The lingas generally represent Siva but there are lingas presided over by gods other than Siva.

(a) Nrisimha Linga.—It is called Gandhamadan. It is perhaps the symbol of Narayan lying on a range of hills ; according to Vinayak

Misra, about twenty miles south west of Padmapur in the district of Sambalpur.

(b) Ram Linga.—Ram is worshipped on the linga in the temple of Suchindram, formerly in Travancore, now in Madras state.

(c) Brahma-Hari-Hara-Linga. — Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, the deities of creation, preservation and dissolution respectively are worshipped on one and the same linga in the temple of Suchindram mentioned above.

(d) Hari Hara Linga —Hari and Hara, the deities of preservation and dissolution are worshipped on one and the same linga in the temple of Bhubaneswar, the present capital of Orissa.

Sidhanta Sekhar makes mention of a wide variety of lingas which are resolved into two classes (A) Natural and (B) Artificial.

(A) Natural : — The first comprises (1) Svayambhu (2) Daiva (3) Gola and (4) Manasa.

(1) Svayambhu linga is of different varieties with many apertures and apexes. It is rough, the bottom is one with the rock ; what is beneath is unknown. The shapes are peculiar in different lingas.

(a) Vishnu linga has the top portion like a conch shell (b) Brahma linga looks like a lotus (c) Agni linga has double heads (d) Indra linga looks like an umbrella (e) Yama linga has three feet (f) Nirrhti linga looks like a sword (g) Varuna linga looks like a Kalasa or jar (h) Vayu linga looks like dhwaja or Pillar (i) Kubera linga has the sign of gada or club and (j) Ishana linga looks like a trisula or trident.

(2) Daiva linga is a type of natural linga. It is long and without Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra bhagas.

(3) Gola linga is like a pumpkin gourd.

(4) Manas linga is of three kinds (I) Raudra linga (II) Siva nabhi linga and (III) Vana linga (1) Natural pebbles of rivers polished by friction come under the first head. (2) The second has three types (a) Uttama or the best (b) Madhyama and (c) Adhama. Uttama has a beautiful vedi or altar and is four angulis in height, the height of Madhyama is two angulis and that of Adhama is one anguli. (3) Vana linga is the natural pebble of the river Narmada. Viramitrodaya classifies them as (a) Indra (b) Aruna (c) Agni (d) Yama (e) Raksasa (f) Varuna (g) Vayu (h) Kubera (i) Rudra and (j) Vishnu ; (a) Indra linga is marked with Vajra (b) Aruna linga is transparent like water and warm in touch. (c) Agni linga is

marked by the power of Agni (d) Yama linga looks like a stick or tongue (e) Raksasa linga looks like a sword (f) Varuna linga has round shape and is marked by pasa chain and ankusa painted weapon (g) Vayu linga is black and looks like a dhwaja or pillar (h) Kubera linga is like a club and is marked by tuna (arrow) and pasa (i) Raudra linga is marked by bone and sula (trident) and is cold as Hima (snow) (j) Vishnu linga is adorned with couch, disc, club and lotus ; it has signs of Srivasta (auspicious sign) and Kaustubha (jewel) and also of Garuda or Vishnupada.

(B) Artificial : —

Lingas which are not natural but are made by men for worship are artificial lingas. They are manufactured from a variety of materials such as stone, metal, clay, wood, gold, mercury, diamond, pearls, copper etc. Besides these, ordinary things such as dust, wheat, barley, rice, milk, salt, ashes, molasses etc. and bones, scents such as kasturi, sandal (paste), jafran (saffron) and camphor also form the materials for such manufacture. There are special types of artificial lingas.

(1) Daruja linga.-It is made of the timber of Sami, Arjuna, Pippala and Uddambara trees

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and also of all such trees the bark of which exude white milky sap. Khadir, Candana (sandal wood). Sata, Vilva and Deodar (pine) trees are also recommended for the purpose.

(2) Dharu linga.—It has faces and facets.

(3) Mukha linga.—It has four faces on four sides and one on the top (C/o Jaina Caityas with four figures on four faces and four votive Buddhist stupas with four Dhyani Buddhas on four sides.

(4) Manas linga—It is the usual type of the portable Siva linga consisting of three parts. The lowest portion is square and is known as (i) Brahma bhaga, (ii) Vishnubhaga, the middle portion, is octogonal and the (iii) Rudra bhaga, the top portion, is cylindrical.

(5) Mrinmaya linga—It is made of pure clay sometimes mixed with milk, curd, ghee, sandal paste, wheat, barley, flowers etc.

(6) Ksanik linga—This linga is made then and there of sand, rice, riverside clay, sandal paste, flour, molasses etc. for worship and after the worship is over, it is thrown away in the water.

In modern Hindu Society Siva and Vishnu are the main gods that are worshipped. *Rudra Yamala* and other Tantrik scriptures hold that

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all Hindu gods and goddesses may be worshipped on the Vana or Svayambhu linga signifying that all lingas are the seats of the deities. The word Siva used in relation to a linga means the specific deity endowed with goodness, benevolence, piety etc. The entire ceremony is permeated with austerity and devotion.

(8) The characteristics of Saiva philosophy.

The characteristics of Siva cult are the exaltation of Siva over the gods. The Swetaswatar Upanishad expounds the supremacy of Siva who is identified with the Absolute being. But the mind cannot embrace the infinite. It can dwell on the finite. It is easy to think of Him through any of His finite and concrete manifestation called Pratik or symbol or image. The divine forms are represented by these symbols. They remind one of God to whom he offers his homage. They help the aspirant to draw the mind from the sense objects and through it to a stage where he sees God, touches God and talks with God. Forms and ceremonials have a great value in helping one to attain the supreme love of God.

This comprehensive course of spiritual discipline is known as Sadhana. The propagators of the Saiva cult have prescribed such disciplines for the benefit of the aspirant and of society at large. The discipline is a wonderful combination of Jnana (Knowledge), Yoga (Raja Yoga), Bhakti (devotion) and karma (action) suited to men of all stages of spiritual growth. It takes its stand on the essential oneness of the human soul with the absolute and leads the devotee, step by step, through concrete forms and rituals to the realisation of the ultimate Truth and thus leads to liberation which is the goal of life.

This divine Being is conceived as the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the universe who is without beginning and end. The absolute independent God creates all that exist by the mere force of His will, by making the world appear in Himself which seem to be distinct from Himself. But it is not really seen so ; it is like objects appearing in a mirror. He is uneffected by the objects of creation as the mirror is unaffected by the reflecting images. He appears in the form of souls and constitutes the objects for their experience. The only reality is the unlimited pure self. cannot limit him. Infinite, all pervading and all consciousness, He is Chaitanyamaya. Creation and dissolution being His sport, He is Lilamaya.

With the three phases of Divine Energy namely Tamasic, Rajasic and Sattvik, He is said to be Trigunamaya. Through the Tamasik phase He appears as the insentient matter ; through the Rajasik phase as the material as well as vital energy, thus bringing about all sorts of changes in the material world as also in the physical bodies of all creatures, and through the Sattvic phase as the mind in its different functions and poses, and as the subject of experience and action in each creature.

He expresses himself through all the ever-changing names and forms called the world. He is the supreme Reality. He is beginningless, uncaused, free from defects, the all-doer, the all knower freeing the individual soul from all fetters. He is endowed with the attributes of self-existence. essential purity, intuitive wisdom, infinite intelligence, freedom from all bonds, infinite love and infinite bliss. Existence, knowledge and bliss are His essential nature. He is known as Kala or Changeless, though Kala or time appears as always changing. He is the first cause of the universe (like the potter of the jar), the instrumental cause (like the staff and the wheel for the jar) through His Sakti. He is also the material cause (like the clay of the jar) through His Maya. He operates through His Sakti as His instrumental cause which is conscious energy, the very body of God. This body consists of five mantras namely Sadyojata, Vamdeva, Aghora, Tatpurusha and Ishana. (c/ Tai. Aran. X. 43, 47) serving the function of the creation, sustenance, destruction, embodiment (Tirodhana) and liberation of souls. Sakti or the Suddhamaya from which He derives his energy and in which His being is grounded is the intermediate link between pure consciousness (Siva) and the unconscious matter. The Absolute in itself is Siva and the Absolute in relation to objects is Sakti. She is Uma, the cause of the bondage of all beings and is the connecting link between the gross and the subtle, the material and the spiritual, the word and the concept. He is the power of Becoming released somehow out of the Eternal and Changeless Being, the Nirakara and Nirguna Brahman. The philosophy is monistic but the approach is realistic. It begins with dualism and by gradual step culminates in Monism. The Advaita philosophy of Sankara which is similar to Saiva philosophy gave a new turn to it.

(9) The Saivite schools of South India.

There are mainly three schools of Saivism in the South (1) the Vira-Saivas (2) the Siva-juana-siddhi school and (3) the school represented by Srikantha.

Agastya is said to be the first propounder of Saiva faith there.

Vira-saivism is an interpretation of the Brahma Sutra from different angles as made by Ramanuja who holds that the world and the souls are organically dependent on God who transcends the world of experience.

The kernel of Vira-Saiva thought seems to be as early as the Upanishads. The Suta-samhita teaches a philosophy similar to that propounded by Sripati. Skanda Purana which gives a high place to Agama literature corroborates it.

The *Sarva-darsana-samgraha* of Madhava treats the Nakulisa Pasupata systems, the Saiva system and the Pratyabhijna system of Kashmir. The Agamic Saivism exists principally in the Tamil country, the Pasupata in Guzerat, and the Pratyabhijna in Kashmir and northern India.

Srikantha, the commentator of the *Brahma Sutra* lived about 1235 A.D. He bases his system on the Sruti. He holds that the world is a transformation of the cicchakti of God. The philosophy of Srikantha, an authoritative exposition of Saivism, is associated with personal religion. According to him Siva is the highest deity being equated with Brahman. Appaya Dikshit, the great commentator (1550 A.D.) summarises the view of Srikantha and tries to harmonise the texts of the Upanishads by pointing out the monistic and dualistic interpretations. Describing the characterisation of Siva as found in the Mahabharata, he says that the personality of Siva is of the nature of pure egohood (also known as pure being i.e. Sat, pure consciousness i.e. Cit, pure bliss i.e. Ananda) and His will is directed to the well being of all beings.

According to Srikantha, Brahman as contracted within Himself is the cause. By His inner desire He expands Himself, shows Himself in the universe as the effect. He cannot remain without His Sakti or energy. He is the material cause of the world. It is His Maya that works as an immanent cause of the production of the world. There is difference between individual souls and Brahman, between prakrti and Brahman. The world of appearance is neither entirely different from Brahman nor entirely identical with the same. He accepts the position of modified monism. It is known as Siva Visistadwaita.

Individual souls according to Srikantha have not emanated from God. They are co-existent with Him. They are real agents and real enjoyers of their deeds. The souls perform action by individual will. There is no mis-attribution of the sense of agency. Karmas being without intelligence (acetana) cannot be expected to produce manifold effects, but are performed by the will of God. Their fruits are distributed by the grace of God who is ultimately responsible for our actions, and also for the enjoyments and sufferings in accordance with our Karmas.

(10) The Pasupata School of thought.

The Pasupata system is a Brahmanical system, for Brahmins only could be initiated in to this doctrine ; but at the same time it breaks off from Brahminism in a variety of ways. It does not recommend Brahmanical rites but it initiates some new ones. Many of its rituals seem to be non-vedic. It advocates monotheism. It is different from the Saiva system of

Srikantha and from that of the Vayaviya Samhita where monistic ideas are predominant.

According to Kaundinya, the great commentator, there are five subjects in the Pasupata system e.g. Kriya (effect), Karana (cause), Yoga (meditation), Vidhi (behaviour) and Dukhanta (dissolution of sorrow).

The word pasu is connected with pasa which means cause and effect.

According to Pasupata Saivism as found in the Vayaviya Samhita, the ultimate God, the Purusa, the Brahman or Paramatman is the original cause. The Pradhan or prakrti is His body. He disturbs the equilibrium of prakrti, manifests in different categories and yet remains unchanged. Eternal power, knowledge and action belong to Him. The destructible (ksara) and the indestructible (aksara) have sprung from Him. At the disappearance of Maya, the universe will vanish with the disappearance of individual souls.

The knowledge of pasu (individual soul), pasa (bondage) and pati (supreme Lord) is the ultimate object and can lead to supreme happiness. All sorrows proceed from ignorance, and are removed when knowledge dawns. Individual souls are aksara (indestructible) and bondage (pasa) is ksara (destructible). That which is beyond the two is the Supreme Lord. Pasa is the energy or Sakti of Siva manifesting itself as prakrti who is evolving the material and the subjective world as well as the pleasures and pains. Pasu appears as many under different conditions and circumstances. Purusa is all pervading and is many. The idea is similar to Vedantic monism. The Supreme Lord is the creator of both pasu and pasa.

Pasu is also known as atman. It goes through the cycle of birth and rebirth. It has the nature of Jnana and Kriya. It is pure consciousness (cinmatra) and is covered with impurities.

The self is different from the inner organs (mind and senses) which are real like the waves of the sea. Experience is due to Grahaka (functioning of the power of knowledge) and Grahya (object to be known). Buddhi (intelligence) manifests itself through diverse forms according to the Vasanas.

(11) Other Schools of thought.

The Sat-Sthala doctrine mentioned in the *Siva-Siddhanta-tantra* is based on the principles of the Gita. It supports instruction by teachers, Self realisation (anubhuti) and argument. Sthala is defined as Brahman. It is the same as Sat-cit-ananda (Existence, knowledge, bliss). This is the ultimate category of Siva from whom mahat and other categories have sprung forth. The Sthala is divided into linga-sthala and anga-sthala and appears as the object of worship and the worshipper. Though Siva remains unchanged in Himself, He manifests Himself in two forms as pure consciousness and as part of linga.

Sthala consists of two parts (1) linga (Brahman) and anga (jiva). His Sakti is also two fold (a) Sakti as Pravrti (when energy moves for creation) and (b) as Nivrti (when bhakti tends to return to God). Both Sakti and bhakti are the same in reality. The Sakti in the linga is said to be bhakti in anga. The unity of linga and anga is the unity of Siva and jiva.

The linga-sthala is three fold (1) bhava-linga (also called niskala, it is to be grasped through inner intuition as pure being) (2) prana-linga (reality grasped by thought) and (3) Ista-linga (fulfilling one's good by way of Self realisation)

Anga-sthala is of three kinds (1) Yoganga (the original cause also known as the dreamless state of prajna when one attains the bliss of union with Siva), (2) bhoganga (the taijas, the subtle cause, the state of sleep when one enjoys with Siva) and (3) tyaganga (the Visva, the gross, the awakening state when one leaves aside illusion or the false notion of the cycle of birth and rebirth).

All characters described in scriptures are only conditional assumptions. In reality He is without any form. His transcendental reality is beyond all logic. Like fire that is different from wood but manifests itself through it, He is different from the world but manifests through it. Lordship is ascribed to Siva in and through whom He is manifested. By a similar extension of thought the image of Siva is regarded as Siva and is worshipped. He is like fire. It is fire that burns and not the iron that is put into it.

According to Sivajnana bodha the world consisting of males, females and neutral objects must have a cause or a creator or an agent behind it.

When Siva enjoys purusa and prakrti He is called Isana. He performs different functions and appears in eightfold forms (astamurti, eg.

earth, water, fire, air, akasa, soul, the sun and the moon). Siva and Sakti go together and the universe is under their domination. Like the moon that cannot be distinguished from moonlight, Siva too cannot be distinguished from Sakti. Both are mutually dependent. Sakti, the power of Sakti-man and the possessor of power are inseparable. In the unity of Siva and Sakti lies Sat-cit-ananda. Sakti, the symbol of bala or strength is also called Spanda or vibration. The qualities sattva, rajas and tamas do not exist in pure Siva. Brahman is both God and souls of beings at the same time. It admits avidya and maya. Due to the association with avidya the individual soul cannot realise its individuality with Brahman and goes through the cycle of birth and death. Due to the association with Maya, Brahman appears as omniscient and omnipresent. That which is beyond the association of consciousness and unconscious elements is pure.

Malas or impurities consist of Dharma and Adharma, and are embedded in maya. They pollute the right perspective, the right vision of things. Associated with the soul they may be either green (ama) or ripe (pakva). When one's malas are purged one becomes more and more pure, and ultimately becomes like Siva.

There are six types of bhakti depending on various conditions. They are omnipotence, contentment, consciousness, independence, unobstructedness of power and infinite power. Bhakti is not an attachment involving the sense of duality with God. It reveals itself as pure oneness or identity with God. Bhakti is of the nature of Siva.

Karuna or grace, according to the Saiva cult, is a distinct line of thought. It is not a work of favour in a general sense It is interpreted as divine creative movement for supplying all souls with fields of experience in pleasure and pain in accordance with their Karma. The anugraha (grace) activity to which is given great pre-eminence in Saiva Siddhanta, includes creation, maintenance, distribution, blending or union and liberation. No real knowledge is possible without the grace of Siva which irradiates other souls and permeates the world. Supreme felicity is also a gift of grace which stands revealed within and without. By it one can combine with Siva in bliss.

The essential virtues such as sama (inner control) dama (external control) titiksa (endurance) uparati (cessation from worldly pleasures) mumuksutha (strong desire for liberation) are indispensable for all.

The Saiva system admits three pramanas (1) perception (admitting both the determinate i.e. Savikalpa and the indeterminate i.e. nirvikalpa) (2) inference (of cause from effect and of effect from cause and general agreement from presence and absence i.e. Samanyata drsta) and (3) the testimony of scriptures.

As said before, Siva is the symbol of the Absolute. He is with form and without it. He is endowed with a blue neck, three eyes consisting of the Sun, the Moon and fire, matted hair, white beautiful colour like the pure alum or camphor, beautiful with the besmearing of ashes all over the body, dazzling like the mid-day terrible Sun, shining like the bright Moon and is the giver of boons such as virtue, wealth, desire and liberation. *Vidhatmodatarangini*, a Tantric scripture of the Saiva cult gives a very beautiful picture of the deity. He is described as one having matted hair, wearing tiger skin and necklace of snakes, with a beautiful body shining with the besmearing of ashes and as one decorated on the upper portion of the body with a garland of rosary. He lives in the heart of every being, is pure, the God of all the gods, the lord of all beings in the universe, the cause and support of the lord of all beings in the universe, the cause and support of the universe and the receptacle of all the devotees who take shelter at His lotus feet. He is endowed with grossness, subtleness, birthlessness, all pervadingness, and is of the nature of the elements e.g. ether, air, fire, water and earth. He has limited Himself, as it were, and is designated as Pasu (animal) or Jiva (Samsarin). Limited authorship, knowledge, false identification of the Self with the non-self are the signs of the pasu. The bond of the soul arises due to the false notion of finiteness, ignorance of its own nature as consciousness and the mistaken view of the body for its reality. The principle of Karma (action), an auxiliary of Avidya (ignorance) working in accordance with the spiritual end of men is the cause of the conjunction of the conscious soul with the unconscious body. To realise the unfettered condition, to recognise oneself as Siva, is the goal of the Jiva (being).

In the *Siva Gita* He is described as unthinkable, unmanifested, infinite, beginningless, all pervading, eternal, Absolute ; and He is of the nature of existence, knowledge and bliss. In

Kashmir the greatest exponents of this cult showed, by His grace, a wonderful insight into the abstruse point of this philosophy. These pure souls of high stature, developed there a very high cult known as Trika. It deals with the nature of Reality and a way of life. Reality is conceived as transcendent and immanent. As transcendent it is Siva, as immanent it is Sakti. Siva and Sakti are not two separate entities. Sakti is identical with Siva, like fire and its burning power. Siva is sava (dead) as it were ; there is in it perfect equilibrium. The relation between the two is one of Tadatmya (identity). Besides the concept of the deliverance of the soul from Maya, from the delusion of duality, it advocates the divinization of the soul i.e., identity with Paramasiva. It satisfies all sides of human nature such as knowledge, love and will.

The Trika philosophy treats of the ultimates: God, soul and Nature. The different important works of this school of which the Saiva Agamas and the Siddhanta works are considered to be most authoritative are modified in the direction of Sankara's Advaita. Though the works differ in their opinion they represent three kinds of monistic idealism.

According to it Siva is the only Reality. There is none second to Him. He is infinite consciousness and unrestricted independence. He is the subject as well as the object, the experiencer as well as the experienced (c/ *Spanda Karika* P 29). There are different stages of evolution of the Reality. All stages are traced back to one Absolute Siva. In order to explain the different stages thirty six tattvas or principles are recognised as against the twenty five of the Samkhyas. Siva is changeless Reality underlying the entire universe. His energy or Sakti has infinity of aspects. *Cit* (consciousness), *ananda* (bliss), *iccha* (will), *jnana* (knowledge) and *kriya* (creative power) are the chief among them. They are the expression of the Sakti of Siva. These five tattvas are transcendental. When Sakti functions as Cit the Absolute becomes pure experience. It is called Siva tattva. The next stage is called Sakti tattva. In this stage life is introduced by the operation of the ananda (bliss) of Sakti. 'The third stage is marked by iccha (will) to self expression. The fourth stage is characterised by Jnana (the conscious experience) of being. It is called Isvara tattva with its power as well as the object of knowledge. In the next stage there is the knower as well as the object of knowledge.

The tattvas are sometimes classified under three heads eg. Sivatattva, Vidyatattva and Atmatattva. Sivatattva is supreme and a class by itself. It is niskala i.e., the undifferentiated basis of all consciousness and action. In this state Sakti functions as consciousness. This consciousness is none other than the Supreme Reality animating the intellect and standing as the eternal witness during all the stages of awakening, dream and sleep. Sadasiva, Isvara and Suddhamaya form the second state. It is the subtle manifestation of Sakti. Atmatattva consists of the other thirty two tattvas from Maya down to the earth.

Maya first evolves into subtle principles and then into the gross. The phenomenal world arises through the force of Maya from which Niyati, Kala, Raga, Vidya and Kala, the limitations of space, time, interest, knowledge and power respectively arise. Niyati is the fixed order governing the distinction of bodies, organs and the like for the different souls. Kala regulates experiences as past, present and future. These five envelope the Purusa.

The word Avidya or Maya is intended to

bring out the essence of position. Through the force of this Maya the infinite experience manifests itself in a number of limited purusas. This force makes the cyclical appearance and disappearance of the universe possible. It obscures the nature of pure consciousness dwelling in the individual soul which is the same as the universal soul. It does not allow the individual soul to realise that the relative, as the relative, has no place in the Absolute. This bondage of the soul is due to ignorance (c/ *Siva Sutra* 2). Kshemaraja observes, "Being infinite consciousness the soul thinks, 'I am finite' ; being independent he thinks, 'I am the body.' (of commentary on Siva Sutra 2) It forgets that the world is wholly unreal apart from Siva and that the Soul is identical with Siva." This bondage is overcome by the recognition of the individual soul as identical with the universal soul. When it recognises itself as God it rests in the mystic bliss of God. It then reaches a conscious state which is free in its nature and therefore cannot be restricted anywhere. 'As it (consciousness) moves in the undifferentiated states of waking, sleeping etc. it never falls from its true nature as the knower (cf Spanda Karika P-4). This is the state of perfect freedom where all intellectual activity is transcended and self-consciousness is obliterated. The sense of plurality disappears. The distinction of knowledge has no place in it (of S,B· 1-3-9) It is an insight changing the phase of the world making all things new. In the strain of Advaita it says, 'That, in which there is no pleasure, no pain, no known, no knower, nor again unconsciousness, alone exists (cf *Spanda Karika* P.5).

According to the *Tantrasara*, Siva is the name of Reality. Bhaskar, the commentator of Abhinava Gupta, corroborates it. He says, "Siva is the Reality in all and is not one among many deities or a decorated image which is only a help to the initiated" (C/o Bhaskari P. 395). The devotees of Siva accept Him as the absolute manifested in name and form for the benefit of the worshippers. They worship Him with mantram (mystic words) consisting of one, four, five, eight or twenty letters and meditate on Him on His different aspects according to their convenience and capacity as instructed by the spiritual guide who, according to the scripture, must be a realised soul. *Tantrasara* by Krishnananda and other Tantric scriptures give descriptions of these mantrams, the meditation of the deity and the method of worship for the benefit of the aspirants. By following the method the devotees gain spirituality and peace and reach in course of time the goal which is freedom from bondage.

The worshippers besmear their body with Vibhuti on the head, neck and ear. Vibhuti is a kind of ashes. White coloured earth (1) available at Malaiswarabetta hill in Mysore is also used by others as Vibhuti. They also use a rosary garland and utter the name of God. Both Vibhuti and the rosary garland are considered very holy as representative symbols of renunciation.

(1) C/o Buchanan's Mysore, Vol. II P. 4.

The worship of Siva is prevalent throughout the country both among the householders and the monks. In the Dravida country (South India) and Rajasthan their number is comparatively more. In Bengal He is worshipped as the beloved husband of Sakti (Mother). He is invariably linked with every form of worship. He is Yajneswar, the lord of sacrifice. Without Him no worship has any effect.

(12). Sankaracharya and the revival of Saivism.

Siva, according to Suta Samhita is the deity of monks. His followers take the path of renunciation and are known as Sanyasins. They put the sectarian marks of ashes (generally consisting of three lines) on the forehead from the left to the right and are classified under the Dasnami Sanyasins. The religion of renunciation was prevalent in India from very ancient times. According to the scripture when the spirit of renunciation is on the wane, religion is at stake, and irreligion consumes the vitality of humanity to the diminishing point of ruin, a great power or force out of pity for wiping out human affliction descends at the critical moment to the earth to set the life current in order. The eighth century witnessed such a personality when the existence of India was about to be blotted out by the blow of corrupt and undigested Buddhism. *Sankar Digvijaya* and *Kerala Utpati* and other books dealing with the subject corroborate such an upheaval. Sankaracharya, the staunch advocate of Advaita Vedanta or monism and the great propagator of Hindu renaissance in medieval India, descended at this critical moment of Hinduism and revived it by establishing four maths or monasteries at four corners of India namely (a) Sringeri in Mysore State, (b) Dwarka in

Sourastra, (c) Puri in Orissa, and (d) Badarika Ashrama in the Himalayas, under the appelations of Sringeri, Sarada, Goverdhan and Joshi Maths respectively. The establishment of true religion on the earth was the main object for the monasteries by the realisation of the Absolute Being through hearing, thinking and meditation as enjoined by the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis and other scriptures. The worship of God through symbols (specially Siva) which gradually help to reach the attributeless Brahman found place in these monasteries.

After the death of Sankaracharya at the age of thirty two at Kedarnath, his disciples took up the unfinished work of propagating and preaching Vedanta. The thought provoking legacy of the great spiritual and intellectual giant expressed through the commentaries of the *Prasthantraya* (the ten Upanishads, Brahma Sutra and Gita) is not only a glory of India of the past, present and future but also a challenge to materialism for all times. This vast spiritual treasure fully developed through the Tikas and Vartikas etc., on those commentaries written by his disciples and their succession, added to the stock of Vedantic lore and enhanced the value of its depth. The arduous task of bringing a spiritual regeneration in the country and through it to the world fell upon the order of monks founded by the great teacher.

Before this well known order of monks came into existence there were Saiva Sects in the country. The Vratyas who are held in high esteem in the Atharva Veda and who do not observe the caste rules and customs are devotees of Siva. They worship Bhairava or Rudra, the terrible aspect of Siva, in whom the universe is vibrating. From the time of the Purana their existence can be traced. Kapali and Kalavadan the two sects mentioned in the Purana prove the assumption. *Sankara Dig Vijaya* mentions about six Saiva sects during the time of Sankaracharya. It refers to the two sects Bhakta and Jangam. Of the six sects four are said to be worshippers of Linga. Though the existence of such sects is known, their existence in an organised way cannot be proved. It fell on Sankaracharya to infuse life in the order. He brought a re-orientation in the new order by the method of grouping.

(13) The Ten monastic orders established by Sankaracharya.

The classification of the order of monks runs thus : (1) Tirtha, (4) Ashrama, (3) Ban, (4) Aranya, (5) Giri, (6) Parvat, (7) Sagar, (8) Saraswati, (9) Bharati and (10) Puri.

The order of monks aiming at spiritual bath is known as Tirtha ; the order aiming at the attainment of desirelessness and freedom from the six changes of life namely birth, growth, death etc., is Ashram ; the order aiming at the practice of desirelessness by living in a forest abounding in fountains is Ban ; the order taking a vow of living in the pleasant forest unconcerned with the world is Aranya. The order taking a vow of living in a forest to pratise the teachings of the Gita untiringly is Giri, the order taking a vow to know Brahman and live near hills is Parvat, the order practising meditation to attain spirituality deep like the sea and live on fruits is Saraswati, the order practising meditation in order to be merged in spiritual knowledge unconcerned with sorrow is Bharati and the order practising meditation in order to be established in spirituality and to become spirituality personified is Puri. The aim of all the monks in the organisation is the realisation of the ultimate Reality through the methods prescribed by the scriptures under the proper guidance of the spiritual guide. "Liberation of the individual self and benefit of the universe by helping others to solve the riddle of life and reach the goal" is the maxim of the order of monks.

The first two of this order of monks falls under the zone of Sarada Math in the West, the next two under Goverdhan Math in the East, the next three under Joshi Math in the North and the last three under Sringeri Math in the South.

All the four Maths established by Sankaracharya in the four corners of India have their Brahmacharins. They observe continence and practise spirituality. According to the *Nirvan Tantra* they are allowed to wear saffron cloth, use a rosary garland on their necks, and carry a trident in the hand if they like. The Brahmacharins of Sringeri are designated as Chaitanya, those of the Joshi Math Ananda, those of the Goverdhan Math as Prakash and those of the Sarada Math as Swarup. Tantra allows householders, too, to practise continence for a particular period. Some practise spirituality according to the rites prescribed by the Tantras. They are classified under Kulachari and Paswachari.

Each of the main four monasteries has its own introduction comprising Dhama (holy place), deity, sacred river (tirth) Sanyasins, Brahmacharins, Mahavakya (the holy pronouncement contained in their respective Vedas) and Acharya (the spiritual teacher). Saraswaty, Bharati and Puri as said before, come under the zone of the Sringeri Math in the South. Rameswar is the holy place and Sureshwar is the Acharya. Chaitanya is the title of the Brahmacharins. Similarly the Sarada Math, Goverdhan Math and Jyoshi Math have their respective holy places, rivers etc. When a monk becomes very powerful in spiritual affairs he creates a group known as Mari. The number of Maries is said to be fifty two in all.

Every monk owes his spiritual source to any one of the main monasteries started by Sankaracharya in the four different directions of India.

Besides the four main monasteries there are other monasteries following the same ideal. In each monastery there is a head called Mohanta. He is responsible for keeping the spiritual fervour of the monastery alive. The management of the property, if any, meant for feeding the inmates is done by him with the help of the Committee formed for the purpose from the elderly and intelligent monks. In each monastery there is a temple dedicated to Siva.

The order of monks as classified above under the ten heads of Dasnami Sanyasins are a great asset to society and the country. They were the torch bearers of religion and culture from very ancient times. Even now they maintain the same position. The valuable commentaries of the scriptures helping the growth of culture and religion are mostly the works of the Sanyasins. These are tonic for vitalising the heart of society in times of adversity—political, social, moral and religious. They add prestige to the civilisation and glory to the society and the country. The all-round contributions of the order of monks to the body politic of Hindu culture and religion is a very great factor which cannot be denied at any stage of society. Without their enthusiasm and freshness the thought current of society would have ceased to flow and the culture and religion of the country would have been ruined long ago. The study of the history of Buddhist and Jaina organisations corroborates this view.

(14) Monastic discipline.

The life of a true monk shows that an advocate of monism whose motto is renunciation and service, and the realisation of the Absolute Being as enjoined by the scriptures, can contribute to the service of humanity. He tries to realise oneness in the universe, and thinks all the beings of the universe as belonging to the family of Siva who pervades it.

There are various customs prevailing in the order. They wear a loin cloth (gerua, orange coloured cloth) like the Vaisnavas. They show honour even to the dead. According to the Mahanirvan Tantra the dead body of a Sanyasin should never be burnt. After showering honour upon him with scents, flowers, fruits, sweets etc., the body should be thrown into the river, preferably in the Ganges. In the holy places of Benares, Allahabad, Hardwar and Rishikesh the prevailing custom among them is to throw the dead body into the Ganges tied with a heavy stone. Though from the sanitary point of view the custom is made very rigorous for the ordinary people, it is relaxed in the case of monks who alone are allowed to maintain their tradition. Perhaps the purpose of the custom arises from the idea of service even with their dead body which may be food to the acquatic beings living on carcases. The custom of keeping the dead body on a tower among the Persian community in Bombay is perhaps imbued with a similar noble idea.

There is another custom among the order. Courtesy demands whenever any monk happens to meet another monk, whether known or unknown, he should say, "Om Namo Narayanaya" i.e., "Salutation to God Narayana." The latter also replies in the same manner.

The monks generally live in a monastery; some live in Akhara. Akhara is also a kind of monastery mainly inhabited by the Nagas differing from the former in certain respects. Some monks prefer independent living and do not live either in the monastery or in the Akhara. They devote their time and energy exclusively to the study of the scriptures and in meditation. Sometimes they go to holy places such as Benares, Allahabad, Hardwar, Kanyakumari, Kailas and Manas Sarovar, to increase the depth of their spirituality and attain peace of mind.

There are three main Akharas (1) Nirvani (2) Niranjani and (3) Yuna. The head quarters of the first is at Allahabad. When the Kumbha fair held once in every twelve years takes place at Prayag, the confluence of the three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati (said to be hidden) the monks of the Nirvani Akhara are given the first preference to take out a procession with all their paraphernalia to the bathing Ghat. The head quarters of the Niranjani Akhara is at Hardwar where the monks of this Akhara get similar preference in the procession during the corresponding Kumbha fair. The head quarters of the Yuna is at Benares. Yuna means very old. It was perhaps the oldest Akhara. Each of the Akharas possessed plenty of landed property. Now due to the passing of the zamindari act by the Government they have all lost their property. Besides these, there are sub-Akharas such as Atal, Abahan and Gudhar, each affiliated to any one of the three main Akharas. Each monastery or Akhara has its temple dedicated to Siva, the chosen deity of the order of monks. The worship and prayer of the deity with devotion is an every day affair with every monastery.

Each Akhara has a head. The head is known as Mahamandaleswar. He must be very intelligent, spiritual, well behaved, generous and be an erudite scholar in Vedanta. He must come from a very respectable Brahmin family. The Akhara head is elected by the Sanyasin order of monks. During the time of the Kumbha fair held once in twelve years at the holy places of Prayag (Allahabad), Hardwar, Ujjain and Nasik where lakhs of Sanyasins, Brahmacharins, householders and devotees assemble for bath in the respective rivers of those places (e. g., the Ganges in the first two places, the Satadru in the third place, and the Godavari in the last place) the Mandaleswar initiates the Brahmacharins into Sanyasins, and the probationers into Brahmacharins. At that time he preaches Vedanta among the monks and householders. Hundreds and thousands attend the religious discourse. Though at other times the Mahamandaleswar is free to tour different countries with the mandali (a band of Sanyasins and Brahmacharins) for the propagation of Vedantic lore he has to stay with the Jamat during the Kumbha fair.

The body of monks living to-gether is called Jamat. Every Akhara has its Jamat. sometimes the body of monks living in the Jamat go on pilgrimage. The administration of it is a difficult affair. Each Jamat has its Pancha ; (five heads all elected from the order of monks) but the Mahamandaleswar is the head of it specially during the time of Kumbha. Besides these there are office bearers e. g., Pujari, Kutari, Vandari, Karbari, Hishabi, Kotowal, Paharadar and Turiwala. The business of the Pujari is to perform every day the worship of the deity Siva with flowers, fruits, scents, offerings, aratrik (waving of lights before the deity) etc., as prescribed by the scriptures. The worship of the said deity is the common feature of every mandali and Jamat. The management of the stores and food stuffs etc., vests with the Kutari (the storekeeper). Karbari is the treasurer who spends money according to necessity. The accountant is called Hishabi. The supervision of the Jamat under the instruction of the head falls on the Kotwal. Paharadar is the sentinal who guards the place and the property of the Jamat ; and Turiwala is the person who plays on the bugle at appointed times. All these duties done by the Sanyasins add to the glory of the Jamat. The true nature and activities of the Jamat can be seem during the Kumbha fairs held in the places mentioned above.

Sometimes some Sanyasin well versed in in Vedantic lore, with the object of preaching, tours with the mandali in different places at different seasons. When he is recognised for his efficiency by the order of monks he becomes a Mandaleswar. His position is slightly lower than that of the Mahamandaleswar or head of any Akhara. The administration of such a mandali, too, is run in a similar way by the office bearers consisting of the monks. But the worship of Siva, the deity of monks, is the common feature of every mandali, monastery and Akhara. Thus the monks form an order belonging to the family of God Siva. This deity of perfection is their common father ; Sakti the beloved consort of Siva, the common mother ; and the universe comprising heaven, earth and other regions, their motherland.

(15) Monastic orders.

The sanyasins are classified according to the method of their spiritual practices, customs, manners and professions :—

(1) **Dandi** :—The monks of this order travel with Danda and Kamandulu. Danda is a piece of bamboo stick covered with gerua (saffron coloured) cloth and holy thread. It is considered to be holy as it indicates rebirth after initiation by the spiritual guide. Kamandulu is a wâter pot which is necessary for a monk. According to the *Nirvana Tantra* only Brahmins without father, mother, young wife, son and daughter are entitled to take to this life. They shave the tuft of hair. They give up the sacred thread when they accept the Danda. The realisation of the Absolute

is their goal. They utter the name of God, meditate on Him as Siva or upon any other chosen deity. They shave their head, beard and moustache and try to lead a pure life, and at no time do they abstain from spiritual practices. They do not touch any object of metal and fire. They have to depend on other Brahmacharins for food as they cannot cook and cannot take food from persons other than Brahmins. They are to live in lonely places and not in towns. According to Manu they must remain indifferent to bodily pleasures or pains, be always absorbed in the meditation of the Absolute, and should not inflict pain upon other beings physically. They should not think of doing injury to others even mentally. They should practise contentment, and should not entertain any desire for giving up any unpleasant thing in order to accept the pleasant ones. They should go for begging only once a day. After twelve years of such practice they can take the life of a Paramahansa if they like or remain a life long Dandi. They generally live in Benares, Hardwar, Rishikesh and other holy places.

There is a class of people called Gharbari Dandi who though degenerated claim themselves to be Dandis.

(2) **Paramhansa** :—According to the *Suta Samhita* (Chapter, Jnana Yoga) there are four kinds of Sanyasins e. g., Kutichak, Bahudak, Hamsa and Paramahansa. Siva is the chosen deity of all ; but the last mentioned sect repeat the holy mantram 'Om' and meditate on it alone. The duty of the first sect is to stay in one place, and live by begging. They besmear over the whole body holy ashes, and worship Siva with devotion. The duty of the second sect, after giving up relations etc., is to live on begging from seven houses at the maximum, and never from the same house every day. They cover their body with clothing, use a water pot, shoe, umbrella, rosary garland, besmear holy ashes, study the Vedas, and remain absorbed in the meditation of God. The duty of the third sect is to take eight morsels of food only, lead an austere life, shave the head including the tuft of hair, roam in holy places, live in the same village only one night, and remain absorbed in meditation. The Paramahansas live on food collected in very small quantities from different places. Insufficient or excessive diet hindering spiritual practices is prohibited. All types of monks seek liberation. The first three sects chant the Gayatri while among the last, one

meditates on the Pranava (the symbol of the attributeless Brahman). All of them practise desirelessness, because desirelessness is godliness.

Among the Paramahansas there are two kinds (1) Dandi Paramahansa and (2) Avadhut Paramahansa. Dandi monks who give up their Danda, and take to this life after some appointed period of twelve years or so, fall under the first category. The second category consists of those who accept monastic life after the proper ceremony by offering oblations to the gods, the sages, the manes and to their own selves. Avadhutas are very free in their behaviour and are liberal like Siva. They do not accept gifts and remain contented with whatever they get. They are homeless, forbearing, free from sorrow and attachment. They are harmless, and are above all injunction and prohibition.

(3) **Naga** :—They are a class of Dasnami Sanyasins having matted hair called Jata. Jata is of three kinds : (a) Naga jata (b) Sambhu jata and (c) Barban. Hair twisted like a rope and appearing like a snake is termed Naga Jata. Sambhu jata is twisted hair like a lump. Barban is a smaller form of Sambhu jata.

Naga usually means one who is naked. They do not wear cloth but now—a—days due to the rigours of the law about decorum they wear a loin cloth which is called Naga Fani. They besmear their body with ashes called Vibhuti. They live generally in a Jamat and lead a very rigorous life. They practise endurance of extreme heat and extreme cold. They are called the warrior class among the Sanyasins. Their duty is to protect the Paramahansas. To avoid extinction of the order of monks they were created during the time of the Moslem rule under the leadership of Madhusudan Saraswati, the great patron of Navya Nyaya, and a very well known monk of vast erudition, in order to protect the Sanyasins from the persecution of the Mollas for whom the Mahomedan law was favourable at that time. Had not the Naga class been created perhaps the Sanyasins as a sect would have been wiped out, and their culture would have deteriorated still further.

According to *Davistan*, a Persian work, the customs of keeping matted hair and besmearing the body with ashes like the Nagas were prevalent among the Madari and Jalali religious sects. It is said that the Nagas are generally hot tempered. Their quarrel with the Vaisnava Nagas, who are very violent, are well known.

But there have been very learned and realised souls among them. Every Akhara has its Naga.

(4) **Alekhia** :—The term Alekhia comes from the word Alek which word the sects of this order repeat at the time of begging rice, dal, flour, salt etc. Alek means one who cannot be expressed in writing, who is beyond speech and mind. The begging bowl they keep is in honour of either Ganesh or Bhairava or Kali. Those with Ganesh designated bowl beg in the morning, those with Bhairava designated bowl in the evening, and those with Kali designated bowl at mid-night. They cook their own food and feed other monks. While begging they wear a peculiar dress called Kelka and Matanga and peculiar ornaments called Girnarpal, Tora, Challa, ring etc., made of silver, brass or copper. These are fastened on the legs, hands and arms. They also tie round the waist bells to make a jingling sound probably to draw the attention of people while begging. They live mostly in in Girnar, Poona and other places.

(5) **Dangali** :—The sanyasins of this order live mostly in Hyderabad, Poona, Satara and other places. They take trade as a profession and do not beg. The money earned thus by trade is spent in feeding the monks. They

build temples and do other philanthropic activities.

(6) **Aghori** :—They are sanyasins of an extreme type. They try to attain the Absolute by practising samadarsitva i. e., equality in good and bad things e. g., sandal paste and excreta. They take flesh, use a stick, and keep a human skull for begging. They worship the terrible aspect of Siva and Sakti. Their behaviour appears horrible to the people. It is said that they drink, kill men, and revive them. From the *Malati Madhav* a well known drama of Bhavabhti, it is known that they wanted to please Chamunda, the terrible aspect of Sakti to fulfill some end.

(7) **Urdhabahu** :—The monks of this sect prefer the life of self torture for pleasing some deity. Those who take a vow to keep constantly one or both the arms raised, are known as Urdhvabahu.

(8) **Akashmukhi** :—The sanyasins who take a vow to keep their face upwards at the sky, and who prefer this method of self torture as a means to propitiate the deity, are known as Akashmukhi.

(9) **Nakhi** :—Some Sanyasins, who take a vow to grow nails and never cut them, are called Nakhi.

(10) **Thareswari** :—Some Sanyasins who take a vow to stand day and night are known as Thareswari. They take food and do other necessary things in a standing posture and sleep also in the same position. Among the Vaisnavas, too, there are aspirants of a like order.

(11) **Urdhamukhi** :—The sanyasins of this sect practise severe austerity with their legs upwards and heads downwards. They tie their legs on some branch of trees and hang. As the face remains above the head in that posture they are known as Urdhamukhi. Among the Vaisnavas, too, there are aspirants like them.

(12) **Panchadhuni** :—The Sanyasins who take a vow to keep fire burning in the four different directions and also in front of them, in mid summer, and offer oblation and food in the fire placed in front of them, are known as Panchadhuni Sanyasins.

(13) **Mounavrati** :—The Sanyasins of this sect who take a vow to keep silence knowing that the practice of such austerities helps them to remain absorbed in the meditation of the Absolute, are called Mounavrati.

(14) **Jalasajvi** :—Some Sanyasins who practise austerity by taking a vow to remain in

water from sunrise to sunset are known as Jalasajvi.

(15) **Jaladhara Tapasi** :—The Sanyasins of this sect practise severe austerity by following a peculiar method. They take a vow to sit in some particular deep place dug for the purpose under an elevated platform in an open place, keep a many holed water pot on it in such a position that the water poured constantly into it by someone, may flow on their body during severe winter nights. The sanyasin who practises such severe method is known as Jaladhara tapsi.

(16) **Karalingi** :—The Sanyasins who take a vow to remain naked always are known as Karalingi. They are considered to be jitendriyas i. e., those whose senses have been controlled.

(17) **Farari** :—The Sanyasins of this order take a vow to abstain from food prepared from wheat, barley, rice etc., but live on fruits alone. To them diet control is considered to be a part of their religion.

(18) **Dudahari** :—The Sanyasins who live on milk alone are known as Dudahari.

(19) **Aluna** :—The Sanyasins who live on food prepared without salt are known as Aluna. Among the Vaisnavas, too, there are aspirants practising similar austerities.

(20) **Auoghar** :—It is said that a Dasnami Sanyasin named Brahmagiri, a follower of Gorakhnath, introduced a sect of Sanyasins called Auoghar. They have a following at Guzerat.

(21) **Gudhar** :—Gudhar Sanyasins wear a kind of cloth called Kelka, put a ring on one ear and a copper plate called Takli on the other ear. They use incense while begging. It is the duty of the Gudhars to perform the rites of a Sanyasin after death. They take away the belongings of the dead Sanyasin.

(22) **Sukhar** :—The duty of the Sukhars is similar to that of the Gudhars. They use Kappar (a kind of vessel made of cocoanut shell) and burn incense while begging.

(23) **Rukhar** :—They are a kind of Sanyasins like the Gudhars with very little difference in their customs.

(24) **Bhukhar** :—The Sanyasins of this sect do not burn incense while begging.

(25) **Kukhar** :—The Sanyasins of this sect beg in a new vessel and cook in it.

(26) **Avadhutani** :—In some places women accept the vow of nuns and are known as Avadhutani. Like the Sanyasins they use a rosary garland, put on the sectarian marks of

the Saivaits, go on pilgrimage and live by begging ; but they are not accepted in Sanyasins' society. Some among them are found to be exceptionally intelligent and religious.

(27) **Gharbari Sanyasin** :—There are some Sanyasins who are degenerated, marry and live with wife and children and live like house-holders. Though they claim themselves to be Sanyasins, they are not accepted by the Sanyasin society and are hated very much.

(28) **Tikarnath** :—These Sanyasins worship Bhairava (the terrible form of Siva) as their chosen detiy, use Tikra (a kind of earthen vessel with many holes), and while begging put on black colour and vermillion on the forehead and look terrible. They place the Tikra on a branch of a tree in their hand, keep a lamp of ghee or oil burning in it, and heat an iron rod in the fire. This paraphernalia at the time of begging draws the people. They are a degenerated sect

(29) **Swarvanghi** :—They are a class of Sanyasins having similarity in customs and manners with the Aghories. This degenerated sect is hated by the Dasnamis

(30) **Tyagi** :—They are very high class Sanyasins. Renunciation is their watchword.

They never beg. They eat if food comes unasked, if not they fast ; wear cloth if available, otherwise they remain naked. They are highly respected and people look upon them as spirituality personified

Besides the Dasnami Sanyasins 'mentioned above there are other Sanyasins

(31) **Atur Sanyasin** :—When a dying man is given Sanyas for the upliftment of his soul in the next birth, he is known as Atur Sanyasin.

(32) **Manas Sanyasin** :—When a man gives up his household duties and is determined to lead the life of a recluse, he is termed as Manas Sanyasin

(33) **Anta Sanyasin** :—Seated in a particular place, when a man is determined to fast unto death with his mind absorbed in the meditation of God, he is known as Anta Sanyasin

(34) **Kshetra Sanyasin** :—When a man takes the vow to lead the life of a Sanyasin till death takes place in some holy place, he is known Kshetra Ṣanyasin.

(35) **Bhopa** :—They are worshippers of Bhairava, the terrible from of Siva. They keep images and worship constantly. They grow the hair long, have beards and put on vermi-

lion on the forehead. While begging they use a kind of bell round the waist or leg, dance and sing the glory of Bhairava.

(36) **Dasnami Vat** :—They are not Dasnami Sanyasins but beg from them and from none else. Their business is to keep the chronologis of the Sanyasins and disclose them in times of necessity. They generally live in the north-western part of the country, go to places of pilgrimage with their horses and other belongings. Though they are followers of Siva, they have much respect for Saraswati.

(37) **Chandra Vat** :—They are practically householder beggars. They worship Siva or Kali, and live mostly in Benares and Patna. They carry with them their cattle, goats, monkey, dog, donkey, go for begging, earn money for maintenance of household affairs, sometimes even by jugglery. They are degenerated and are very much disliked by the cultured.

(16) The Lingait order of Saivism.

(38) **Lingait** :—The followers of Linga are known as Lingait. This sect was introduced in 1160 by Basava, a Brahmin of Belgaon in Maharastra. They are also called Jangam. According to their doctrine Linga is the subtle

frame, the indestructible origin of the gross. Skanda Puran says that ether is the mark, the earth its pedestal. As all deities merge in it, it is called Linga. Linga is the creative power of Siva, the symbol of the absolute, He is with form and without it. He has attributes such as grossness, subtleness, birthlessness, all—pervadingness, and is of the nature of the elements e. g., ether, air, fire, water and earth.

In South India the worship of Linga is very much prevalent. They carry the linga in hand or tie it round their necks from the time of initiation by the spiritual guide who may be either a spiritually advanced male or a female leading a strict religious life. They use Vibhuti, wear a rosary garland round the neck, and put on the sectarian mark. Basava introduced widow re-marriage in his community. Now-a-days the Jangamas do not advocate pilgrimage, but perform special worship. On Sivaratri days they go to Mallikarjuna at Sri Saila, or to Kalahasti, which is twenty miles from Balaji Tirupati. Some tie a bell on the hand or on the leg while begging. They have their monasteries too. This sect is found mostly in Maharastra, Guzerat. and in the Tamil and Telegu countries. They have a vast literature in Telegu and Canarese languages. Mackenzie collected a large number of their works of literature such as *Basaveswar Purana*, *Basava Purana*, *Prabhulingalila* and *Sarananulilamrita*, *Viraktaru Kavya* and the like. The commentary on the Vedanta Sutra by Nilkanta is their most authoritative book. There are some Jangama who carry a well dressed bull while begeing. Some of them live in Baidyanath.

(17) The Yoga Schools of Saivisim.

Yogi :—The yogis are counted as worshippers of Siva. *Patanjal Darsan* is the most ancient philosophy of this sect. Kanfat yogis may be said to be yogis of a later period. They have a vast literature. *Hata pradipika* by Sahajananda, *Chintamani* by Swatmaram Yogindra, *Datratreya Samhita* by Datratreya and *Gorak-samhita* by Guru Goraknath are some of them. Some deal with the process of spiritual practices such as (1) Yama (consisting of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, non-acceptance) (2) Niyama (consisting of cleanliness, austerity, contentment, study of the scriptures, self-surrender to God) (3) Asana (postures) (4) Pranayam (rythmic breathing exercise helping concentration of mind) (5) Pratyahara (drawing in of the sense organs) (6) Dharana (fixing the mind on a single object) (7) Dhyana (mental flow in an unbroken current) (8) Samadhi (concentration par excellence when the mind loses its grip on all other things). They also deal with other practical suggestions for self control, diet etc. By such practice the yogis can attain supernatural powers (e. g., Anima, Laghima, Ishitwa, Prakamya i.e. of being very small like an atom, very big, going at will where ever they like and attaining at will whatever is needed, etc. They can even give up the body and remain absorbed in Absolute Bliss by the grace of Siva.

The yogis are classified under Kanfat, Auoghar, Machendri, Vartrihari, Saranghibahar, Kanifa and so on.

(1) **Kanfat** :—They are the worshippers of Siva. Guru Gorakhnath, the famous yogi and the author of Gorak Samhita, Gorak Kalpa and Goraksataka, was the founder of this sect. Abulfazal, the author of *Aini Akbar*, who lived during the period of the Moslem rule specially refers to Kabir, the great saint of the time; but Kabir himself speaks highly of the greatness of Gorakhnath. The sacred Gorakh Kshetra mentioned by Abulfazal in this history,

includes the holy places of the yogis at Dwarka and Hardwar, and the Gorakh Kshetra at Dum dum near Calcutta which was destroyed by Aurangzeb and replaced by other yogis, as all these belong to this sect.

At the time of initiation they make big holes in their ears and put on rings of stone or horn as they believe these rings to be very holy. They put a black thing called Nada tied with the Seli (a king of thread specially coloured) round their neck. They wear saffron cloth, keep matted hair, besmear their body with ashes and make sectarian marks like the Saivaits with Vibhuti. Like the Sanyasins they accept the spiritual guide. In their monasteries in West India they build temples of Siva, where in they worship with great devotion according to the scriptures. They go to places of pilgrimage. They do not marry, and lead a pure life. There are monks and monasteries of this sect. Their title is Nath. After the realisation of the Absolute by the grace of Siva they are called Siddha Yogis.

(2) **Auoghar Yogi** :—Like the Kanfats they worship Siva, use Nada and Seli but do not make holes in the ears.

(3) **Machendri** :—The followers of Machendra Nath, the great yogi are known as Machendri.

(4) **Vartrihari** :—The yogis who accept Vatrihari, the great yogi are known as Vatrihari.

(5) **Sarangibahar** :—The yogis who sing, with a musical instrument, the glory of Siva and Sakti at the time of begging are known as Saragibahar.

(6) **Durihar** :—The yogis who take the profession of selling cotton cloth are known as Durihar.

(7) **Kanifa** :—These yogis take to begging as their profession. They catch snakes also by playing on their Tubri (a kind of musical instrument). They accept Gorakhnath as their first Guru. Some keep matted hair, wear saffron cloth and put on seli round their neck. These people generally belong to the western part of the country. Some go out in a body with their family and cattle, and live in camps and beg in different places.

(8) **Aghorepanthi Yogi** :—The behaviour of this sect is like that of the Aghore Sanyasins ; the only difference is that they wear a sort of ring like the Kanfat Yogis. They call themelvess as Swarvanghi.

(9) **Yogini** :—Some women who take the life of renunciation are known as yogini. Some of them wear ornaments.

(10) **Sanjogi** :—The household yogis who live with wife and children are known as Sanjogi.

(18) Monasticism in a changing society

Besides the sects mentioned above, Anandagiri speaks of two schools of Kapalikas—one Brahmanic and the other non-Brahmanic. He also speaks of the various sects of Saivas with various marks on their bodies to distinguish them from one another.

The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas were anti vedic according to Ramanuja (c/ Brahma Sutra, Sri Bhasya, 2. 37) and also according to Sankar who chastised them.

Frazer in his article on Saivism in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics says that the non-Brahmins and out castes in South Indian temples worshipped Siva and offered human sacrifices. Some identify them as Kapalikas. Sri Saila is a great Kapalika centre referred to by Bhavabhuti. The Sthaļa mahatmya records of the place as mentioned by Frazer verify the existence of the Kapalikas at Sri Saila. They also developed a strong centre at Ujjain.

The habit of besmearing the body with ashes is a very old custom in Saivism. The Pasupata

Sutra and the Bhasya of Kaundinya describe this practice.

With the lapse of time things change. The "old order changeth yielding place to the new" says Tennyson. With deterioration in the field of politics, morality and society religion, also is vitiated by its evil effect. It is followed by corruption, the gangrene of the body organic. The Sanyasins are after all human beings. They cannot escape its evil effects. They too, are affected by it. When the undesirables of society in order to avoid punishment for crime take shelter under the order of monks, 'when persons unfit to lead the life of renunciation and purity join it, and when persons pressed by hard economy, poverty etc., take the garb of Sanyasin, deterioration in the order is bound to follow. They cannot follow the Ideal ; but corrupt it and ruin it. In ancient times the state regulated and controlled an unhappy choice of profession in order to avoid deterioration. But in modern days with the increase of unemployment in the country which the state is piteously unable to check due to inefficiency and the lack of resources, the problem of maintaining the purity of the order has become very acute.

Om, salutation to Lord Siva.

ERRATA

PAGE	LINE	READ	IN PLACE OF
6	6	basic solidarity	basicsolidarity
8	4	1821	2821
10	5	doubtlessly	doubtless
16	1	(4) Vestiges	(5) Vestiges
21	8	for	to
26	6	equivalent	eqivalent
28	7	Vyasa.	Vyasa
28	22	prakriti	prakrity
29	5	Agama	Vgama
29	5	Vedanta	Vedana
30	25	Meykanda	meykanda
31	3	Abheda-Saiva	Abeeda-saiva
35	4	pillar	Pillar
36	4	pasa (chain)	pasa chain
36	4-5	ankusa (painted weapon)	ankusa painted weapon
39	24	Space cannot	cannot
56	15	C/	of
57	4	C/	of
66	10	showing	showering
67	23	Once	Ouce

70	18	seen	seem
70	21	the	in
73	27	While the last one	while among the last one.
76	4	Which	which word
83	7	Chronology	chronologies
84	20	day	days
87	10	Kind	King

MOTHER WORSHIP

BY

SWAMI TATTWANANDA

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INTRODUCTION.

This book is an attempt to give a picture of Mother worship in India. It will remove the misconception that India is the land of idolators. 'The progressive reading of the spirit into matter' throws light on her glory. The conception of the Infinite concretised through the finite developed in full measure in this land of religion gives a vivid picture of the depth of her culture which, in its distinctive essential character, is based on 'universal receptivity'. Sakti cult which is Motherhood of God is purely the product of Indian thought. Its origin, development and philosophical background support this contention. The universal, synthetic and scientific approach determines the position of this cult at the level of Advaita, the culmination of all religions and system of philosophy.

The object of life is peace and unalloyed happiness in all spheres of life. It can be fulfilled by overcoming the difficulties in life's journey by following the preparatory spiritual courses recommended by this cult. The sincere practice of the prescribed methods helps the development of purity, unselfish love and complete resignation to the will of the Absolute Being which, though devoid of name and form, is the Divine Mother. The essence of life is immortality. It lies in the reslisation of Sakti cult or the Motherhood of God. Its tone is monistic and approach realistic. 'Fearlessness' is the special gift of this cult to humanity. The spread of this cult which is optimism about the life eternal is the need of the hour.

MOTHER WORSHIP

Religion, the cure for the malady of thought.

The world is a complex one. Man is at war with himself, for he is losing his spiritual moorings. He thinks highly of himself, makes himself strong and valiant, works incessantly to conquer the external Nature and go beyond the limitation of the senses. Despite hard struggles to rise above Nature he fails. He cannot attain peace with happiness which is the goal of life. Desires stand in the way. Some desires are fulfilled ; but not all. When some are fulfilled new ones crop in. Thus he finds that they are deceptive and remain ever unfulfilled. Attempts to fulfill these unending desires bring satiety. When failures in life's journey are full to the brim, when the dogs of trials and tribulations bark, he behaves like the stag in the fable. He cannot get rid of the vast mass of influence of the sourroundings to which he is used. Restlessness and anxiety fill his mind with horror ; disappointments cast their gloom over him. He feels then like weak plants always wanting a support without which he feels a kind of insecurity. This feeling increases all the more when he realises that 'the world is a bubble and the life of man less than a span', that it is 'curst from the craddle', that 'from the womb to the tomb it is full of cares and fears', and that it is but a 'walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets upon the stage and then is heard no more.' (co/- Macbeth, shakespeare) An eminent psychologist named Dr. Jung after years of research in mental health came to the conclusion that in the majority of cases of men the problem is a spiritual one, of finding a faith that could sustain them from overgrowing frustration, the feeling of insecurity, anxiety to know the purpose of life, the fear of old age and death.

The desire for peace is an eternal and universal yearning of the human heart. This led the great thinkers of all ages and nations, specially of this vast continent which is India, to think deeply on the cause of such innate fear arising from wrong notions about the ultimate truth of life and find a way out to shake off fear complex, indecision and unmanliness. He first makes a thorough search in the external world ; but despite the perfection of the means at his control, the height of material progress fails to meet his demand due to the confusion of ends. He then turns inwards for a clear and ultimate picture of the ends for the good of the self as well as of humanity. In such hours of insecurity the inner voice shows the light. It lies in tapping the hidden energy of the soul through faith in religion. It says there is a way out ; man can be free if he likes. The saint had a past ; the sinner has a future. What is required of him is sincerity in the pursuit of truth. Analysis of the phenomenal world shows that the whole society is the assertion of this one principle of freedom. All movements echo the same thing. Not only human beings, all creatures from the lowest to the highest hear the same voice and are rushing towards it. Joys and sorrows, difficulties and struggles lead the journey of life towards freedom. The voice rings in different languages the same music : 'Come ye, unto me that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.' The inner voice stretches its hand as religion and comes forward to present to the world and its people a clear and ultimate picture of life to save them from the confusion of ends. It proposes a God as the only way of escaping such difficulties. The scriptures of the world which are but little maps to delineate the glory of such a Being corroborate it.

(2) The nature of the ultimate truth.

The study of religious history shows that continued research in this sphere raised men to the status of saints and seers. They found a solution of the great problem. The ultimate truth revealed itself to them. It can be summed up in one word, '*Abhi*' 'fearlessness.' It is the best tonic for a depressed soul. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (1. 4. 2.) points out fear is generated when there is the existence of another. (*Dvtiyat vai bhayam asti*). It arises out of the ignorance of one's own nature and disappears at the dawn of true knowledge. The revelation of the seers are the best recorded scriptures for the proper guidance of humanity. Fearlessness presupposes the realisation of Truth. This Truth is Brahman which holds the universe as a part of Reality and in which all created beings are strung together as a gem of necklace on a string. (c/o Gita 7.7.)

The suprme spirit who is an undivided whole is beyond time, space and causation. The changeless Eternal infinite (Tai 11, 1-3) is beyond the reach of the senses and cannot be limited by form and attributes. (Brih. 111, 88). He is transcendental. All that can be said of Him is, 'neti' 'neti' (not this, not this, Brih-111, 9-26). Brahman is described as '*Asti bhati priyam rupam nama chetanamsa pancakam, Adyatrayam Brahmarupan jagatrupam tathodvayam.* 'Existence, knowledge, bliss, name and form these are five conscious entities ; of these the first three are characteristics of Brahman, and the last two are those of the universe. This has two aspects, the Absolute and the Relative, the Nirguna and the Saguna, the Unconditioned and the Conditioned, the Unmanifested and the Manifested. The frame of the mind is such that it cannot conceive of the Absolute. The significance of the noble saying-*Satyam, Sivam Sundaram*, Truth, Excellence and Beauty-remains unexplored by it. Man cannot go beyond name and form to attain lasting peace with happiness which is the object of life. Even the most thoughtful man fails to realise Truth which travels on earth secretly. He cannot keep his mind pitched for long to the thoughts on the formless Lord of the universe. But the soul cannot remain satisfied with the finite (*Nalpe sukam asti*), its craving for light is ever on the increase. The aspirant feels an urge for the home coming of the soul to his true innate nature. This is the realisation of the unity of the existence of the individual soul with the Absolute. With the lapse of time circumstances help him to accumulate experience to find a way out of the crisis, a solution of life's problem. What is required is constant vigilance. The urge guides his daily life. He creates some symbol of God for him. He believes that through it His beauty shines. 'Any object of adoration is better than self adoration' says Hafiz, 'for it serves to lift the worshipper out of himself and leads towards that One'. The famous melody of Omar Khayyam, the great mystic, echoes the same. He says, 'Idol, Temple and Kaba are alike the house of worship ; the ringing of the (church) bell is the hymn of worship ; girdle and crucifix are all in truth the tokens of worship'.

The scriptures suggest to the entire satisfaction of humanity the means for the home coming of the soul to his true innate nature.

The Sruti, the only authentic source on the subject says, *Upasakanam Karyartam Brahmanorupakalpana* (conception of God with name and form is meant for the benefit of the aspirants).

It is described very beautifully as '*Abrahmani Brahmadristyanusandhanam*' meaning 'an attempt to look on any object which is not Brahman as Brahman, to look on matter as manifestation of spirit'. Professor Haekal, the scientific monist holds that the two are not distinct entities but forms of one single entity. Matter is a relatively stable form of energy into which, on disturbance of equilibrium it disappears, for all forms of matter dissociate. Nama and Rupa, name and form which imply ideas and ideas objectified, are psycho-physical. The universe physical or psychical, within or without, is a play of force. Mind, life and matter are each varying aspects of one cosmic process from the cause. This view is supported by Herbert Spencer the great evolutionist. The cosmic process manifests in itself various forms such as the sun, the moon, fire,wind, earth etc. which are taken as symbols of Saguna Upasana for the realisation of the Absolute.

(3) The worship of God through symbols

The study of religious history shows that the worship of God through symbols prevails in some form or other in almost all countries. In some places it is crude, in others in a refined form. Ghost worship in ancient Egypt, ancestor worship in some countries, Shinto worship in Japan, Manjusri and Amitabha Buddha worship in Burma, Ceylon and China, and Christ worship in Europe and America-all these forms of worship through symbols crude or fine have more or less a similar aim at finding a way out of the fear complex, or indecision for the manifestation of the soul in man, only differing in depth of purpose, intensity of thought and methods of procedure. The symbol stands for the emblem of God. Through it the playing of the deity is realised. Describing the significance of symbolism, a western savant says that the choice of the symbol is a protest against idolatry (Berth, Religion of India. P, 262). The symbols representing God have great advantages. All the while when man worships through symbols, he thinks of God and of none else. The thought of the all pervading Holiness sanctifies his mind, and purges it of all evil propensities. The switching of his thought God ward is the greatest purifier. He tries to feel the divine presence through concrete forms. The abstract idea is instilled even in the crude mind with the help of symbols. The process of vitalising symbols through rituals is of great help in the gradual assimilation of the idea of the divinity of the soul. This act of dedication helps the aspirant to realise that the physical entities are but the Absolute seen through different modes of cosmic energy. In western and Jewish countries, too, the origin of symbolism may be traced. Beth El was but a stone. The Hebrews believed it to be the house of God. The worship of Osiris and Isis in ancient Egypt, the carrying of the big golden image on the occasion of Vakes festival in Greece, and similar customs prevalent among the Babylonians and also among the Roman Catholics in Italy show the existence of symbolism in some form or other throughout the world.

Such attempt is described in Christianity as the death of old man, as renunciation and detachment in Indian philosophy, as surrender of the self to God or Goddess in the Puranas and Tantras, and as the control of the senses in the yoga sastras. In order to have the dynamic evolution of divinity and the realisation of the Supreme, the aspirant takes the help of symbols or images of God or Goddess. The usual symbols, according to the scripture, are Shalagrama, Siva lingam, the Ganges, a precious stone, a holy diagram (yantra), a holy book, a jarof, water, or a flower (c/o, Matrika Tantra ch.

XII). The symbol may be an image of stone or of clay, a photo, or a picture. It does not matter. The images have no value ; but if an aspirant realises God and His grandeur through them, his realisation is worth more than the whole mass of precious stones or images available in the world. The only thing that gives authority to a system of theology is the perception of the devotees or seers to whom alone the divine truths are revealed and not to any set of arguments however convincing it may appear to the human mind, for the ways of God are not always conceivable to man and cannot be explained in the light of our worldly experince. Sometimes this conception is misinterpreted as an act of hallucination by interested persons who out of the glamour of materialism explain such phenomena from a materialistic outlook. They are more interested in the sense world than in the world beyond it. They cannot go beyond space, time and causality. The world beyond phenomena remains unexplored by them. There are others who cannot understand the significance of such worship due to ignorance. They ridicule and condemn it. Plenty of blood has been shed, and fanaticism has been let loose to play its worst role of iconoclasm, arson and loot. This kind of intolerance is deplorable even in these days of scientific development.

Religion is condemned by many. Even a modern thinker of international fame remarks, 'Religion kills joy. What is called religion or at any rate an organised religion has filled me with horror and I have frequently condemned it and wished to make a clean sweep of it'(Inside India, John Gunther, p 440-41) . Both Marx and Freud who have brought a revolution in the sphere of psychology condemn it. They envisage in the emergence of religion the frustration of human instincts. Despite such condemnation Freud admits that frustrated instincts create the foundation, 'on which things of the highest value in human culture have been built'). Though modern civilisation has brought an impressive array of magnificent achievements it has left men to the tether's end. The highly complex and mechanical industrialisation have created an artificial atmosphere and pomp. This pomp is another name for vanity. It does not solve the problems of life. Restlessness, split personality, fear obsession, mass hysteria,and abnormality are growing in such a volume, that humanity seems to be driven to the Biblical truth—'man does not live by bread alone.' Unless this tendency is restrained there is danger for civilisation. Religion alone can come to its rescue. Professor Toynbee says, 'The spiritual side of man's life is of vastly greater importance for man's well being than is his command over non-human nature'. It encourages man to attain perfection, become a real man, enjoy unbounded freedom, bliss and wisdom. It shows the correct path towards the goal, saves him from the confusion of ends and teaches him not only why it should be done, but also how it should be achieved. A man of religion alone speaks like one in authority. He inspires others to go ahead. Religion is immensely practical.

The worship through symbols requires some methods to be followed and the methods must be universal and scientific for their solidarity. The control of the senses, renunciation, meditation on God and knowledge of the scriptures are essential pre-requisites for acquiring fitness for the purpose. The aspirant accepts the most synthetic and catholic forms of spiritual practices prescribed by the scriptures specially by the Puranas and Tantras which are prevalent throughout the country. Mantra, (mystic words) yantra (mystic diagram) and mystic rites which help such practices are the constituent forces, the true representation of the basic power that maintains and makes a being.

The cult of symbolism takes time to develop. It finds the highest expression in the conception of personal Gods such as Ram, Krishna, and their manifest Lila or play. This conception has its origin in love which is a basic and universal emotion. Without love life is intolerable. It determines most of man's activities, shapes his conduct, gives him joy and makes his life interesting, throws a charm on the whole world. This ruling passion expresses itself in various ways such as the love of the self, kith and kin, hearth and home, community, the nation, race, wealth, power and possession. Improper application of this emotion prompts the vilest deeds, moves the tyrant, the exploitor, to dirty jobs, and the gangster to dare-devilry. The proper application inspires man to follow his ideal and do the bravest work. It guides the soldier to court death for the native land, and the mother to face even the lion for saving her beloved child. The darkest anti-social work as well as the crowning social virtues come from this universal emotion. It is like a lamp that can illumine an altar and can set fire to a house.

The way of its application depends on its motive force. When it is guided by selfless motive it is proper; but if it is guided by self interest it is improper. This love is innate. Selfless love is innate. Selfless love for others is the prime mover of all pious acts. The *Gita* (4, 7) and the *Brahmasutra* (2,1,33) admit the power of love and hold that the conception of God developes from its innate nature. Man cannot remain satisfied with anything short of personal God. The highest conception a man can have is a being with form. Attributes without form are inconceivable but the urge to go beyond Nature is universal. To love Him through form is comparatively easy as love is based on kinship. So man wants to establish some relation with Him. This relation is called *Santa, Dasya, Sakya, Vatsalya and Madhura.*

(4) Saguna Upasana

The conception of personal God is expressed in service and love. It grows through these relations, which constitute the best channels prescribed by scriptures. The child's love for its mother, father, brother, sister and relatives ; the servant's love for the master even at the cost of his life ; the real friend's love in adversity and prosperity, the mother's love for her child, beautiful or ugly. and the faithful wife's love for her husband, rich or poor, are familiar to all. The innate love of God expressed through these attitudes brings unalloyed joy and happiness. The *Santa* relation is a kind of dispassionate attachment to God without any personal relation. It is a contemplation of the essential nature of God and one pointed devotion without any other craving. It brings calmness. Sages like Sanaka and others are votaries of this ideal. The *Dasya* relation is a step ahead. It represents the faithful servant's personal love and devotion ; its votary looks upon himself as being humble and behaves in such a way that he is as it were the priviledged servant of God of infinite glory. Mahavir, the spotless personality of the Ramayana, is the embodiment of the *Dasya* votary. But the mixture of awe and reverence is traced in it. In the*Sakya* attitude which is designated as an advanced state of love, the sense of comradeship and equality prevails. The consciousness of God's glory and might recede to the background. Sridham, the cow boys of Brindaban, Bhima and Arjuna are typical examples of this attitude. The *Vatsallya* attitude is the frenzied state of love ; the conception of God as Eternal and omnipresent is totally absent in it. The intensity of love in this shining model brings the aspirant very close to the chosen ideal. But the intensity of this ruling passion culminates in the *Madhura* attitude in which the lover and the beloved become one. Radha and Mirabai belong to this group.

There is a charm in the relations described above. The conception of God as one seated in heaven in awful majesty dealing with reward and punishment to the virtuous and the sinner respectively is absent. He is nearer than the nearest and dearer than the dearest. In it the emotional nature has full play and man has not to feel out of his elements. The benefit of such full play results in the gradual melting away of attachment for worldly things. Renunciation then becomes easy and natural, and the aspirant feels pure joy. That is perhaps the reason why this easy approach appeals to the majority of mankind as it is suited to the taste and capacity of most people. What the aspirant requires is to shift the forces away from worldly objects to God only. The devotee then wants to serve Him as friend, father, mother, brother, husband, son, daughter etc. who are the nearest and dearest. He who is really blessed with the association of God through such relations and has realised the Ultimate Reality is indeed the ideal for the aspiration of others. He wants to serve God playing the role of father and mother whose filial love is very much expressed in the Agamani songs of Gouri at the time of the autumn session of Durga puja which is considered as the national festival of Bengal.

On the other hand God seems to find some outlet for the manifestation of his divine glory. He wants the fulfilment of the law through this love which is pure. As He is all merciful and good there is no bar to His coming down as an Avatara to reveal His Beauty and Glory. As He is all sweet, all beautiful, all loving and loveable there must be some to enjoy His Beauty and Glory, sweetness and love and to be loved and be enjoyed by Him. In the history of Christianity we find that the spirit of God came, out of love, to Jesus as a dove and spoke to Him in a clear and audible voice. The Kena Upanishad which is classified under the Talavakara branch of the Samaveda verifies such revelation of God's glory and beauty. In it there is a passage—*Tasmineva akasey striyam ajagam bahusobhamanam Umam Haimavatim.* (Brahman appeared before Indra, the lord of the gods in the form of Uma, instructed him on the nature of Brahman who is self effulgent, independent, and pervades the universe. She also instructed that austerity, self control, activity, the Vedas and their parts are the feet as it were of Brahman and Truth.

(5) the Sakti cult

God's glory seems to be manifest most in his power of Sakti. The sakti cult is a mighty force for universal good with records of past achievements and prospects of a glorious future. To realise the significance of this cult man has to think deeply why the worship of the Mother has been given preference. We will find on scrutiny that the reason behind this is the high position given to woman in society and religion. The moral and social conditions of ancient India in which woman played with men an equal part to share the prize of immortality have a value as they paint a vivid picture of the country of that time. The scriptures have enjoined that the wife and the husband are equal halves of one substance. Both take part in all the affairs religious and secular. History shows that the woman in the old Testament, the Koran and the Zend Avesta is made the scape goat for the crimes committed by man. Tertullian says, 'Woman is the gate of hell and mother of all evils.' She has been described in some places as created for man's pleasure and as a means of bringing sin, suffering and death unto the world. This disregard disappears in the course of time. It is said that Christianity learnt to honour woman from the pagans. With the change of circumstances this disregard turns into respect for her. But the case is different in India from the very beginning. From the dawn of her culture the greatness of woman is acknowledged. Hindu law says, 'Woman is pure in all her limbs, her body is sacred as the temple of God'. Mrs. F. A. Steel, the author of several novels on Indian life writes, 'In regard to the general position of woman in India I think it is better than our own'. Sir Monier Williams remarks, 'Indian wives possess greater influence than the wives of the Europeans'. Describing woman's position in Hindu religion, Louis Jacoliot, the French author of the 'Bible in India' says, 'Here is a civilisation which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places woman on a level with man and gives her an equal place in the family and in society'. He also says, 'India of the Vedas entertained a respect for woman amounting to worship'. In support of this a dozen women revealers of Vedic wisdom who instructed people on the higher knowledge of Brahman, the Universal spirit, can be cited. Such evidence is sufficient to disprove the allegation made by some western writers, against Indian woman that she has been denied the dignity of woman and has been made an Instrument of pleasure and of positive obedience'.

(6) The human and the divine in womanhood

Another reason for the preference seems to be the consideration that both human and divine aspects are predominent in her. Both combine in her in a very high degree. It does not mean that man lacks in these two aspects but the percentage of the combination is higher in her. Man is strength no doubt, but woman is beauty ; man may be reason that governs ; she is wisdom that moderates. It is said, 'Woman is the centre of a circle, the fixity of which depends upon her chastity'. Because of this high position she has many parts to play. As daughter, sister, wife, and mother her role is very important in the family and society. Daughterhood wifehood and motherhood—all combine in her. Purity, the essential feature of womanhood shines most in the combination of all these. Indian woman has shown the worth of womanhood in her life. Sir Birwood says, 'In Sri Bharat and its sacrosanct people............women are perfect daughters, perfect wives, and perfect mothers.' Her importance and responsibility in the family and the society increase with the change of her condition. Daughterhood transforms into wifehood. She is then the queen and lady of the husband, but the wife may ask, does demand, and take her place. She is glorious as wife but she has a still higher part to play. She is divine as mother and this divinity aspect is the thing that is respected most in India. Motherhood is the spiritual transformation of wifehood. She then feels it her privilege to give. Within this circle she transcends self through effacement. This personified self transcendence of purity and love shines with all the glory in the mother. That is why she is the Goddess enthroned in her son's worship. She is the bringer of peace and sanctity.

Man knows man through mother. The first attraction of man which is love is expressed through her. This love is a basic and universal emotion. Life becomes intolerable without this. It sways every thing. It is the emanation of God in human relationship. It cannot be adequately described in language. This act of the soul is manifest most in the mother. The reason behind the acceptance of the female principle is found in this prime factor of life which is love.

This basic principle is not confined within the boundary of India. Wilkins refers to this in the history of ancient Egypt. From the description of God Osiris and Goddess Isis, the beloved consort of the said God, corresponding to Siva and Sakti of India, the conception of the worship of the feminine principle is inferred. The triangular symbol representing her bears a similarity with the Sakti yantra used in India. This Sakti yantra is considered as very pure and is worshipped as the Divine Mother in the virgin. The phallic association ascribed to it by some savants either out of some motive, or out of ignorance, is totally absent in this conception. The worship of the feminine principle finds acceptance in some form or other in Christianity too. It stirs the profoundest depth of man. The conception of the 'blessed Mary, the pre-elect of God's virgin' symbolising 'profund simplicity and supreme patience (Rossetti)' is peerless in its own way. A child in the mother's arm, the mother beside the cradle, the worshipper beneath the cross, and glorified in humility—this Christian conception of God is undoubtedly the richest gift of the Catholic church to humanity.

(7) Basis of the Motherhood of God.

The lives of great souls like Ramprasad of Halishar, Hoogly, who lived some two hundred years ago, of Bamakshepa of Birbhum, and the latest saint saviour of Dakshineswar show that the relation of the mother and the son is the purest and sweetest of all that can be established with God. It is incomparable. The sonf eels very keenly the unselfish divine love of the mother in whose lap his safety is entirely secured. He wants to feel the divine presence with all his senses. He wants to see Her, touch Her, converse with Her, dress Her, serve Her and give Her comfort. He is the worshipper of Her sweetness and beauty which he likes to relish fully. But She has two aspects, the mild and the terrible. A true and sincere son takes into account both the aspects.

Traces of mother worship are found in the *Aitaraya Brahmana* (5. 21), the *Katyayana Srauta*

Sutra(4.3.14) and in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*. From the *Rik Samhita* (4.40.5) it is known that Surya realised that Mother Parvati is Para Brahman, with one of Her feet on the back of the lion and the other on that of the demon Mahishasura. She is the Goddess of victory, the Mother not only of any individual but also of all beings in the universe. She is the embodiment of tenderness and terror, and is to be worshipped not only with tears but also with toil and blood. The Mother, though She appears to be finite, is really infinite. The Infinite reveals itself as the finite through Her. She is the sum total of every thing and is the combination of the beautiful and the sublime. She does not inspire any awe.

The cult begins in the *Rig Veda*. It says, 'That divine Spirit was with afflation, single with Her who is sustained within Him ; other than Himself nothing existed. First desire was found in His mind and that became the original productive seed.' Speaking of the divine cause of creation, the *Sama Veda* reiterates, 'He felt not delight being alone ; He wished another and instantly became such. He caused His own self to fall in twain and thus became husband and wife. He approached Her and this human being was produced'. According to mythology (*Brahma Vivartha Purana*) Brahman or the Supreme Being, after having determined to create the universe, became by His Supreme Power twofold, the right half being male, and the left half female. She was with Brahman. She is Prakriti. She is illusion without end.

She is represented as the embodiment of Power, 'the supporter of the earth living in heaven', the Supreme power 'by which the universe is upheld', the great Mother of the devotees, and is identified with 'Uma of golden hue' in the *Kena Upanishad*. In the *Mahabharata* She is the sister of Krishna, in *Tantra* the wife of Siva, 'Devi' in *Devi Bhagavat* and *Markandey Purana* (*Chandi*). She is one with Brahman whose nature is Sat, Cit, Ananda (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss) and is contemplated as the Goddess with male and female attributes.

The Buddhists, too, developed this cult about the seventh century A.D. Their mysticism assumed some form such as the Vajrayana, and the Sahajayana. The Madhyamic and the Yogachara systems supplied their philosophical background and dealt with mystic ritualism. It gave importance to mantra, mudra and mandala, and maitained that this practice is necessary for awaking psychic power (Sakti). Reference of this cult is found in *Brihat Katha* by Soma deva during the reign of Harshadeva, the king of Kashmir in the eleventh century, whose reign is referred to in the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana and in the *Aini Akbari.* Vindhyavasini, the famous temple of the Goddess in Mirjapur in U. P. has been specially mentioned.

As said before this cult is prevalent in India from very ancient times. Brahmanical Tantra gives a detailed picture of the new synthetic outlook. It deals with various traditions. It speaks of the geographical classification and is divided into four Schools—Kashmir in the north, Kerala in the south, Goura (Bengal) in the east and the Vilas. Vila is a school not confined to any particular region but found everywhere

(8) The Path of love

The goal of life is peace and happiness or liberation, and the easiest approach, to it is the path of love for God as mother, but it is not so easy as it seems to be. So long as there is the least trace of desire in the mind for worldly pleasure, the intense yearning for the Almighty as Mother does not arise. To love a pleasant object is one thing; it is comparatively easy, but the love of God who can neither be seen nor felt at the beginning is different. It is difficult; but devotion or the path of love helps one out of this difficuty. The scriptures present a graded course through which even a novice may gradually develop this intensity to reach straight to liberation. Reflection makes it clear that Christianity and Islam, too, recommend this path of love as the only approach to God. But this love is not attained in a day. It has to be cultivated. The aspirant has to a pass through a preparatory course of training. In the beginning the mind refuses to move in this direction and to think of God always. It appears boring; but determined efforts make the task easier, provided the aspirant is sincere and is not attached to worldly things. Various methods are prescribed for a solution of this initial difficulty. The chanting of hymns, prayers, worship with offerings, meditation on God as Mother, on her power and glory, the reading of the scriptures containing the glory of God and reading the lives and glorious deeds of those who have realised her and received her grace—these are the ways to do away with the feeling of monotony and make the practice interesting. Looking upon the whole universe as God Himself is difficult, and the conception of the Formless void is equally difficult, as the aspirant is not used to it ; but if he chooses any object within the creation and looks upon this as God the task becomes easier for him as he is used to it. The love of God through human form, specially the mother form, is surely the easiest way for him.

The divine forms represented by image (pratima) usually made of clay or stone, metal or wood or by picture (pata) help the aspirant to draw his mind from other objects to itself and through it to God. They are aids to spiritual exercise. It is a sort of kindergarten schooling. Through it the aspirant arrives, by perseverence and by God's grace, at a stage when Supreme bliss is attained.

(9) *Tantra tn Sakti cult*

The votaries of Sakti cult take the Sakti aspect of God for worship. Sakti is the divine Energy of God. She is represented in one form or the other such as Kali, Durga, Shodashi, Tara, Bhuvaneswari, Kamala, Jagatdhatri, Matangi. Chhinnamasta, Vagala, but the chosen deity differs in different aspirants. Just as the worshippers of Vishnu are called Vaisnavas, those of Siva the Saivas, those of Ganapati the Ganapatyas, those of Surya the Souras, Her worshippers are known as the Saktas. They regard their chosen deity as the Divine Mother. They are the worshippers of God as Mother. They havea distinct course of spiritual discipline and this discipline is known as Tantrika Sadhana. Tantra is the scripture of this cult. It is full of the prescription of Her worship and the glory of Sakti. This Sakti is also known in the Purana as the beloved consort of Siva. The worship prescribed in the text differs from that of the Vedic method. It appears that the Tantrik worship replaces in the later period the Vedic rituals. It brings various powers or siddhis to those who go in for these. It fufills Dharma, Artha and Kama. It brings liberation, too, to those who want it. It is a comprehensive course and covers the entire ground of spiritual endeavour. Its philosophy is similar to that, of the Advaita Vedanta. It takes its stand on the oneness of the individual soul with the Absolute Being. The aspirant proceeds from the lowest rung of spiritual ladder step by step through concrete forms and rituals to the realisation of the highest rung of the same ladder which is the realisation of the Ultimte Truth and its resultant, liberation or Mukti. It is ascendency over the forces of nature, by the union of Siva and Sakti. It uses new symbols and simplifies Vedic rituals and introduces complexity into the esoteric portion. Probably the ritualistic portions ef the Atharva Veda reappear in Tantric forms with symbols.

The worshippers of Sakti are classified under two main heads—Paswachara and Virachara. Different spiritual exercises are prescribed by the tantras for different groups of aspirants. The code of conduct for the backward aspirants with its characteristic marks of dullness or ignorance is Paswachara; but the course of spiritual practices for the comparatively advanced votaries with their characteristic marks of ambition and energy is known as Virachara. The difference between the two lies in their method of procedureand sanctions in offering. In the latter there is the sanction of non-vegetarian offering, whereas it is strictly prohibited in the former.

Kularnava Tantra classifies them under seven heads (1) Vedachar, (2) Vaisnavachar, (3) Saivachar, (4) Dakshinachar, (5) Vamachar,

(6) Siddhantachar, and (7) Kaulachar. Each successive system is considered to be superior to the previous one, and lastly Kaulachar is praised as the best. Vedachar lays stress on the cultivation of cleanliness of body and mind. According to it the duty of the aspirant is to rise early in the morning, about two hours before sun rise, and practise meditation and prayer. He should honour the spiritual guide by prostration, utter the name of the Divine Mother, meditate on Her on the thousand petalled lotus at the palm of the head, worship Her with the prescribed accessories and meditate on the Supreme power with undivided attention. Vaisnavachar lays stress on the cultivation of devotion (bhakti). The aspirant has to be alert in his duty. He should practise continence in words, thoughts and deeds, and give up jealousy and hypocricy. Purity is the watchword. Saivachar lays stress on the cultivation of knowledge or Jnana. It is similar to Vedachar with some difference in their methods of procedure. Dakshinachar consists in the consolidation of the gains acquired in the three preceding stages. The worship of the Divine Mother with offerings and meditation on Her divine form, is held usually at night. Vamachar is the reverse

of Dakshinachar. It is the path of renunciation and the practice of rites with woman and wine as some hold. To all Tantric schools woman is an object of veneration. It is a difficult path of renunciation, in the midst of the objects of enjoyments. Siddhantachar consists in the worship of the Divine Mother with devotion at night with offerings irrespective of purity or impurity by making them pure by mystic words. In it the aspirant arrives at a definite conclusion after proper consideration as to the relative merit of both the path of enjoyment and renunciation. Kaulachar consists in the worship of the Divine Mother without considering time, place, action etc. The behaviour of a Kaulachari is peculiar. Sometimes he is sober, some times he behaves like an insane persen as if he is demoralised or as if he is a ghost, weeping, laughing, singing, dancing and so on. To him both clay and sandal paste, friend and enemy, the palace and the burning ghat, money and the grass are equal. He is so immersed in the thought of the Divine Mother that other objects or thoughts have no place in his mind. He reaches a stage in which Brahman or the Divine Mother becomes a reality to him. Veda, Vaisnava and Saivachar belong to Paswabhava ; Dakshina and Vamachar to

Virabhava; and Siddhanta and Kaulachar to Divyabhava.

The difference between Virachara and Paswachara lies, as said before, in their method of worship, the former having the sanction to offer fish, meat etc. whereas the latter has no such sanction; but in both there is the prescription of offerings which are of two kinds, Rajasic and Satvic. Rajasic offering consists of objects such as meat, fish etc. as prescribed by scriptures, and Satvic offering consists of objects such as rice boiled in milk (payasam), clarified butter, honey, sugar, and other accessories. It does not sanction offerings prescribed for the Rajasic aspirant. The Kalika Purana sanctions the sacrifice of birds, deer, goats etc. but the Padma Purana condemns such sacrifice, and holds that the killer, the seller, the sacrificer and the supporters go to hell.

(10) Dakshinachara and Vamachara

Though Tantra classifies seven kinds of Acharas or customs there are practically two classifications, Dakshina and Vamachar. The former recommends Satvic offering and accessories for the worship of the Divine Mother and condemns the use of wine, meat, fish etc., whereas the latter worships with Rajasic offerings. The special feature of Vira-char rituals lies in its direction to its votaries to face temptations boldly and overcome them, and not to avoid them. The votary is allowed to come into contact with attractive sense objects, and at the same time is asked to resist the vigorous pull of these lures and draw the mind away form such things, and fix it on the meditation of his chosen deity who is the Divine Mother. By this process of sublimation the sense attraction turns into pure love of the Divine Mother. When this daring method is successfully followed it helps in the conquest of the flesh at one stroke. Another daring method is Sava sadhana. On the eighth or fourteenth day of the moon the votary has to practise it in some lonely house, or by a river side, or on the hill, or in any lonely place, or under a Bilva tree, or at the cremation ground. This sadhana is practised at dead of night in the midst of dreadful surroundings on a dead body. The body of a person who was beautiful and young, but who died in battle, or by drowning, or by snake bite, or with a stroke of the stick or missile or sword, is prescribed. The body is to be placed on a blanket, or on a deer or tiger skin. When the aspirant is seated on the corpse in the prescribed posture in a lonely crematorium in the darkest night he should practise, under the guidance of a realised soul who has attained success in such method, and worship the Divine Mother in order to seek Her grace. This dreadful practice is considerded to be one of the neccessary concommitants of the Mother worship, for it makes a swift march to the goal ; but it is full of risk to the unwary. Any weakness of the flesh may compel him to yield to the passions worked up by the rites. Many become mad through terror.

The Tantrik scripture mentions two kinds of Avadhutas among the householders, unmanifested and manifested. The unmanifested Avadhuta is inwardly a Sakta, outwardly a Saiva, and in congregation a Vaisnava, and he behaves in diverse ways. It is very difficult to know his real nature. He is a Kaul, as said before ; and roams about merged in the thought of the Absolute. The manifest Avadhuta wears red cloth, puts on vermillion on the forehead, rosary on the neck, besmears red sandal paste on the body and is always rejoicing.

By a quotation from the Kularnava Tantra, the Kauls advocate in the worship of the Divine Mother the offerings of wine, meat etc. and hold that wine is like power, meat is like Siva, and the devotee of Siva and Sakti is like Bhairava. One may attain liberation when these three are combined in the worship. Human psychology is the same every where. Among the Roman Catholics, there is a custom to accept cakes as the meat of Christ and wine as his blood. There is some significance in customs and rituals which the guide and the aspirants alone can understand and realise, and not ordinary man.

Mention is made of a sect called the Chalaipanthi who worship Sakti and behave like the Vamacharies in many respects. They live near Jaipur and Jodhpur. They practise rituals with the help of the spiritual guide who is known as Chakreswar. Like the Kauls they sit for Chakra at night. The Bhairavi and Bhairva form different sects. They are prevalent in Bengal. They practise spirituality according to Kaulachar. They wear saffron cloth, put on Vibhuti (ashes) on the body, rosary on the neck, vermillion on the forehead and hold the trident in the hand. They also sit for Chakra like the Viracharis. Some times they go on pilgrimages. Sitala pandits, too, form a sect. They come from a low class of society in Bengal, carry the image of the Goddess and sing the glory of the Goddess. They put on a copper ring on the finger or a bangle on the hand.

There is another sect called the Karari who worship the terrible aspect of the Mother e. g. Kali, Chamunda or Tara. They are known as Kapaliks and behave like the Ahories. Mention of this sect is made in the *Sankar Dik Vijaya* and in the *PrabodhChandrodaya*. They cover their body with ashes from the burning ghat, their neck with the human skull, anoint the forehead with collyrium, grow matted hair, wear a tiger skin at the loin round the waist, hold Karoti in the left hand, a bell on the right hand and always utter, 'Sambhu', 'Kalish', 'Bhairaba' etc. It is said that formerly they used to sacrifice human beings in the presence of the Goddess to attain some object of desire ; but because of the fear of punishment by the Government such practice is no longer observed. Some pierce their body with an iron rod, fix a sharp sword in their tongue and neck, and lie down on pricking nails, with a knife in some particular part of the body. During the time of the Charak festival in the month of Chaitra some men coming from low class are seen to behave in that way with some motive. It is due to the heinous practice of some degenerated people who are unfit to realise the ideal that the Tantras have acquired a bad name and are censured. It is a warning against the Tantrik cult. It has very little connection with the ideal of the Sakti cult.

It is obvious that the purpose of worship is to heighten the aspirant's devotion to the Mother. It helps concentration of mind on Her Divine thought. The worship is to be performed when a man is instructed properly by a spiritual guide. The aspirant should place himself under the guidance of a liberated soul who can transmit spirituality to him. While describing the characteristic marks of a liberated spiritual guide, the *Visvasara Tantra* says that he alone is to be a guru (guide) who is truthful, calm, dutiful, respectful to his parents, endowed with the qualities of Brahman, well versed in all scriptures, efficient, well behaved, beautiful, free from physiological defects, well versed in the customs and manners of the family, self controlled and is established in some fixed Asrama. The scripture warns against the selection of an improper guide. According to the *Kamakya Tantra* the greedy guide who is unable to kindle spirituality should be forsaken.

The guide is very essential for the acquisition of the best spiritual lore which brings liberation. The preceptor (guru) chooses for the aspirant his Ishta (chosen deity) i.e. the form of God suited to his mental calibre, imparts to him the chosen mantra (sound symbol) corresponding to his chosen divine form, teaches him how to worship the Ishta with devotion every day. Fitness on the part of the guide alone is not sufficient. The aspirant, too, should possess the essential requisites and be up to the mark. Strenous effort with patience and perseverence, like that of the bees flying from flower to flower for collecting honey , is essential for acquiring fitness to follow the instruction of the guru properly. What is required of him is that he should maintain the purity, sense of duty, self control, belief in God and the scripture, and be in readiness to be of any service to the parents, spiritual guide, country, community and to God.

(II) The Technique of worship

Some preparation is necessary before beginning the worship. After bath preferably in some holy water the aspirant wears washed clean cloth set apart for the purpose, enters the place of worship within a temple or a shrine attached to his household having a holy association, and inspects the arrangement of the essential accessories. They comprise of Kosa, Kosika, Kamandulu, Tripadika (i.e. copper vessel big and small, cups, water pot, copper plate, three legged stand), conch, lamp, incense stick, incense stand, bell, asana (seat), Puspapatra (plate containing sandal paste, white and red rice, bilva leaves, tulsi leaves, tender grass) and Naivedya (offering consisting of dressed fruits, sweets etc). After prostration with devotion with the mind pure and free from anxiety he sits for worship facing either the east or the north with the deity in his front, or to the left. First he finishes Sandya vandana, japa and meditation—the daily rites which help the aspirant to turn his mind towards Mother.

Before beginning the real worship he follows the kindergarten method as it were. He performs a series of rituals which are also considered as part and parcel of the worship being an aid to spiritual exercise. He rinses the mouth with a sip of water, and prays to God for purity. This act of rinsing with the chanting of mantram or Sacred formula and with a particular finger pose is called Achamana. (It is an effective means of self purification which instils faith in Para Brahman as the ultimate Reality). He chants hymns in honour of the sun and makes offering (Suryargya) consisting of water, bilva leaf, sandal paste, grass, red flower, water etc. in the Kosika and prays for divine Energy. After this he invokes the being in the Sun along with the presiding deities of the sacred rivers such as the Ganges, Yamuna, Godavary, Saraswaty etc, to descend in the vessal of water and make it holy. This ritual is Samanyarga. This water itself then becomes a purifying agent. He sprinkles this holy water on every object of worship for purifying the accessories such as flowers and the container, incense hold, light stand and the offerings. He utters with folded hands mystic words for an auspicious atmosphere (punmyahabachan). Next he makes Samkalpa with special mantra to worship for some definite end, with devotion and without any hindrance. After finishing the worship of the deities of the door, (Dwara devata) he casts an auspicious look around for the removal of celestial obstacles, hits the earth with the heel of the left leg for the removal of the obstacles of the earth (Vignapasaran), performs rituals for the removal of evils with a special offering of curd, lac dye, black gram, fruits, sweets etc. (Bhutapasaran). Then follows one after another the purification of seat (Asan suddhi with the neccessary rituals), the purification of the flowers (puspa suddhi by the touch of fingers while uttering mystic words), the purification of the hand (Kara suddhi), salutation to the line of gurus (Gurupangtipranam), fencing of the quarters with mystic words indicating walls of fire all around for the safety of the worshipper (Dik bandan) and purification of the body and mind by burning with words and rituals the gross and suble evil being in the man with the dazzling light of the Holy Spirit (Samkshepa bhutasuddhi.)

Through this form of rituals the aspirant's thoughts are led, step by step, to the dissolution of the universe and the merging of the soul in Para Brahman and again to their emergence in a deified form. The aspirant, in the course of the practice of this process thinks of drying up and then burning to ashes the body of the personified evil (Papa purusha) together with his own subtle body and of the generation of a fresh celestial subtle body by nectar dribbling from the moon in the forehead.

After this he performs rituals for total consecration by moving the palm of his hand seven times from head to food (Byapaka nyasa). The next items such as dedication of the self by the touch of the palm on the chest with chanting of mystic words (Jiva nyasa), deification of the alphabets by rituals with the touch of hands at different places and uttering mystic words in ascending and descending orders (Matrika nyasa, Antar matrika nyasa and Samhara matrika nyasa etc), dedication of the hands (Kara nyasa), dedication of the limbs (Anga nyasa), breath control (Pranayama), dedication to the sages (Rishi nyasa), dedication to the deities of seats (Pita nyasa), dedication to the power of seats (Pita sakti nyasa) follow one after another.

The physical body and every point on it is divinised through this process of nyasa.

Though these thoughs of divinisation seem to be poetic or allegorical the effect produced by them is tangible. The aspirant feels that his mind is gradually becoming spotlessly clean, elevated to a higher plane and vision extended to the all pervading Divinity. Psychology says what a man thinks intensely he becoms. If he keeps brooding on his weakness and wickedness, weak and wicked he becomes. On the contrary if he thinks intensely that he is pure, pure he becomes. It is a kind of self hypnotism. What he has to do is to dehypnotise himself by reversing the current of thoughts. The idea behind all processes of self purification connected with worship is divinising the soul.

The worship is to be performed with unflinching devotion after learning the preparatory course from the spiritual guide in accordance with the prescriptions of the scriptures. When the aspirant wants to worship through any one of the symbols such as images, yantra etc. he can perform it in various ways. If it is an image of Durga he may meditate thus : "I worship Durga who is bright like a wave of lighting, who is seated on the back of a lion, who is terrible, who is attented by virgins (powers said to be attendents on Siva and are eight in number), weilding a sword and a shield by the hands, who is holding disc, a sharp sword, arrow, bow, string and having the fore finger pose (a sign for threatening sinners), who is bright like fire, who is wearing the moon (on the forehead) and who is three eyed."

As said before the upasana prescribed in the Tantras may differ from that of Vedanta, but the philosophy is the same belief in the essential oneness of the human soul with the absolute and in the wonderful harmony of knowledge, yoga, devotion and action. It leads the aspirant, step by step, through concrete froms and rituals to the realisation of the Ultimate Truth and resultant liberation. The unflinching devotion to the chosen deity is a very important factor in the step. He meditates on the Supreme Spirit. He thinks the Divine Energy expresses Herself through all forms, all names and all changes ; he imagines for some time that his own self has merged in the Absolute and that the entire creation is nothing but a myth and has vanished altogether. From the Supreme Spirit his own self as the worshipper as well as the Divine form whom he intends to worship have sprung up. He imagines that the Divine Energy in him is transmitted in the image. If it be of clay he instils life by mystic words and rituals. This act of breathing life is called Pran Pratistha. It is only after this that the image is considered to be a living emblem of the Divine Mother. He then invokes Her as a living entity, prays to Her, asks Her permission to worship Her with various accesories such as water, flower, scent, fruits, garlands, cloth, delecious food, sweets etc.

The worship is a course of entertainment both physical and mental. Physically the deity is welcomed, offered a seat, bathed and dressed and regaled with flowers, incense, dainty dishes etc. This is a process of humanising the divine. There is another process called divinisation of man through the preliminary process of self purification. By the practice of these prescribed methods the aspirant feels that he lives as close as possible to the Mother in a mood of holy communion. The repetition of the entire course of entertainment mentally is called Manas Puja. This helps the aspirant to withdraw his mind from physical surroundings and remain absorbed in divine contemplation leading him from the gross to the subtle plane. The worship may be performed in the simplest way with five upacharas (items) consisting of sandal paste, flowers, incense stick, burning lamp, fruits and sweets. If the aspirant is eager to worship with ten upacharas he has to add five more items e. g. Argya (consisting of bilva leaf, scent, rice, water, etc), water for washing the lotus feet of the deity, water for sipping, water for bath, water for re-sipping, in addition to the five items mentioned above. If the aspirant is not satisfied even with this he may perform it with sixteen upacharas i. e. over and above the ten, six additional items comprising seat (usually of silver), Madhuparka (prepared by mixing curd, clarified butter, honey, sugar and water), cloth, ornament, garland, betel leaf etc. have to be offered.

The object of these rituals is the deification of every object in the universe to lead the aspirant step by step from the physical plane to the mental and then to the spiritual plane so that he may feel his identity with the Absolute which is his real nature. These rituals are observed generally on special occasions.

These are only meritorious acts; but they are not final. What is required is unflinching devotion to the chosen ideal. What the scripture teaches is not the suicidal advice of the denunciation of the world but deification. It means the giving up of the false notion of the world as one generally knows, as it appears to him. When every object is deified nothing but God remains (c/o- whatever exists in the universe is covered by the Lord). The outlook then changes.

(1) The significance of worship

After performing the necessary rituals and worship with upacharas, of Guru (spiritual guide), Ganesh (the God of success) Siva (the Lord of destruction), Kosiki (the divine Mother Durga), Vishnu (the God of preservation), the ten Dikpalas (the deities of the ten direction e, g, Indra and others), the nine Grahas (the deities of the planets e. g, Aditya and others), the ten Avataras (Ram, Krishna and so on), the ten Mahavidyas (the powers of the Mother), all the male deities, and all the female deities, the aspirant finally meditates on the Diving Mother.

The conception of the Divine Mother is

represented best in the image of Kali. She is described as the personification of the brightest and blackest, of tenderness and terror, birth and death, happiness and misery, smile and sorrow, attraction and repulsion, cause and effect, spirit and matter, phenomonon and nomenon and every thing that exists. This accepted symbol of woman is "nude with flowing hair so dark a blue, that she seems in colour like blue, with four hands two in the act of blessing and the other two holding a knife and a bleeding head, garlanded with skulls, dancing with the tongue portruding, on the prostrate figure of a man white with ashes". The atmoshpere round him then becomes saturated with divine touch. He feels pleasure in worshipping Her with flowers, scents and other accessories procured by him to the best of his capacity. Not satisfied with this he worships the Mother with mental offerings. This is a process of grdual sublimation by the process of deification of the subtle world step by step. He dedicates the lotus imagined to be located at his heart as Her seat, the mind as Argya, offers at Her feet ambrosia trikling from the lotus of a thousand petals for rinsing Her mouth and for bath.

He dedicates the sky as Her cloth, the essence of smell (i. e. the earth) as scents, the mental faculties as flowers, the vital breath as incense, the essence of light (sun, moon, fire etc) as Her lamp, the ocean of nectar as Her edibles. Harmlessness, the control of passion, compassion, forgiveness, knowledge, simplicity, absence of egoism, freedom from anger, absence of lust, stupifaction, pride, malice, Jealousy and greed—these are conceived as mental flowers and he offers these varieties of flowers at the lotus feet of the Mother. Lastly he offers the fruits of action, japa, meditation etc. for Her satisfaction.

When the worship with accessories is over he offers delicious food to Her. After this he makes Aratrika with flowers, waving of light, chamar or fan and cloth representing the constituents of the universe namely Kshiti, Ap, Tej, Marut, Vyom i, e, earth, water, fire, wind and ether. These essences of the five elements are called Suksma Bhutas and are symbols of the gross ones e.g.. smell of the earth, liquidity of water, heat and light of fire, touch of wind and sound of ether. The whole universe thus represented by its elementary constituents is offered to the Mother symbolically by way of worship. The humanised view of the Mother is lifted up to the super cosmic view. It is obvious that this practice of ritual is undoubtedly a bold step for transcending all forms or Bhutas.

Then he makes Homa, rindling fire for the purpose on a mystic diagram with mystic words. This is probably a survival of the vedic form of worship. Through this, offerings are conveyed to the Mother. This process helps to transcend the limitations of the form imposed by the image, physical or mental. The aspirant according to this method is required to offer the universe with its creator the personal god by way of oblation to the fire in order to attain realisation of the identity of the soul with the universal spirit which is Mother or Para Brahman. He invokes the chosen deity, identifies Her with the fire. After worship with fruits, sweets etc. He makes Samkalpa to offer with mystic words 108 bilva leaves soaked in clarified butter. When the rituals are over he extinguishes the fire with curd, offers Purnapatra, Dakshina and the effect of the entire process of worship. Then he finishes the ceremony with prayer to forgive him for the omissions and co-mmissions during the period. After this he imagines all beings merge in the Mother from whom they have emanated, and he places the Mother in the heart whence she was taken out at the beginning for worship. It is obvious that the whole process of worship from the beginning to the end is thus one of feeling oneself indentical with the Absolute manifested as the Divine Mother. It is a kind of laboratory work for the comprehension of the great Ultimate Truth and for the attainment of liberration (Mukti). This comprehensive course prescribed in the Tantra covers the entire ground of spiritual endeavour. This distinct course of spiritual discipline for the realisation of Brahman (*Brahmbhuyaya kalpate*) is undoubtedly the greatest contribution of the sages for the benefit of humanity and it constitutes the best solution of life's problem.

(13) Spiritual Communion

When devotion becomes intense through this gradual process of sublimation the son feels through her grace that he is a child in the hand of the Divine Mother, that she is love personified, and that she has become every thing (c/ *Tatsristwa tadevanupravisat*—Tai), and that Mother is love and love is Mother, both are the same in essence. This love is emana-

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tion from the Mother in human relationship. When love dawns in the heart Motherhood finds an outlet, love comes means Mother's will is fulfilled. It is a state into which the son's ego dissolves into an oneness with the object of his love which is the Divine Mother, It knows no defeat. This love is fearlessness, dedication, purity, inner surrender, beauty and sublimity which can never be adequately described in language. The son then realises that she assumes name and form. By her grace the sun, the moon and the lightning shine, and do their respective duties. The Divine Mother is a circle whose centre is every where but whose circumference is nowhere. She covers all beings, but they cannot know her because of Her Avarani sakti (the power of veiling) and Vikshepa sakti (the power of distorting Reality). Creation, preservation and dissolution are but the play of the Mother. Her toy is the thunderbolt charged with the power to shake the world. Though terror is the name given by some because of Her manifestation through famine, epidemic, floods etc. love is the essence of her being. The son ungrudgingly desires to serve Her in all her manifestations both mild and terrible. He feels that he belongs to

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the Mother and Mother alone playing round Her knees and sucking the breasts of the mother which consist of this world and the world to come. Rabindranath, the Nobel Prize winner for literature and the great poet wrote beautiful poems on this grand conception. This spiritual relationship, this feeling of oneness with the Divine Mother is immortality, fearlessness, peace, truth, Eternity.

She is Chinmayee, consciousness personified, the saviour of beings from the ocean of misery. When she is satisfied she becomes the cause of the liberation of beings (*saisa prasanna barada nrinam bhavati muktaye*, Chandi 1,55-57). She is not only the giver of the fruits of action but she is also the bringer of peace in all spheres of Adhyatmic, Adhibhautic and Adhidaivic world. This is corroborated from the Vedic santi mantra cited in mother worship. She is the centre of concentric circles and the meeting place of all contradictions. This personified love which is mother is the culmination of all religions and all systems of philosophy. She is harmony. She is synthesis. The scriptures which prescribe such noble conception of the motherhood of God are universal, synthetic in the sense that they effect a co-ordination of karma, yoga, jnana and bhakti by emphasising the vital sentiments such as will, effort, self surrender, mercy and grace. They systematise the ritualism of karma with the purifying process of yoga, purest Advaita jnana with the purest Bhakti and the most passionate yearning and love. The life of the most modern saviour Sri Ramakrishna who realised the Mother, and talked with her, is the best example of such harmony, having wonderful effect not only on the individual but also on the society for it is capable of changing the thought current of the country and re-shaping it accor-ding to the ideals suitable for the age. From a comparative study of the religious history of various countries it can be inferred that India is the land of bliss because of the fact that the significance of the worship of the Mother who, though eternal, pervades the universe (*Nityaiva Jagatmurti staya sarvamidam thtah*, Chandi 1, 64) has been realised here in its completeness.

(14) The Universal aspect of Mother worship

Every true religion is founded on the realisation of the ultimate Truth. Spirituality is the basis. The strength of its foundation lies in literature. No religion can maintain its purity unless it is preserved in literature which may be called the sheath and spirituality the life within. This sakti cult is expressed in a language which is the vehicle of Hindu culture from its inception. This language is sanskrit which represents a prodigious class of world literature. It consolidates, by virtue of its literary genius, in vocabulary and forms of expression, which have permeated the entire subcontinent of India. It has brought the whole of the far East and south east Asia under a cultural homogenuity. It has a vast literature.

For the sake of convenience the Jurisdiction of this cult has been divided, according to nature, form, modes and conception under three zones. According to the Maha Siddhanta Tantra the zone of this cult is divided under three Kranta (divisions) e, g, (1) Vishnu Kranta, (2) Ratha Kranta and (3) Asva Kranta. Vishnu Kranta comprises the land east of the Vindhya hills and extends right up to Java. Ratha Kranta is the country north of the Vindhya hills including Mahacina, and Asva Kranta comprises the country westward. Each Kranta is said to have developed sixty four Tantras.

The Tantrika literature represents a very important part of Indian spiritual lore. From a study of its history it is known that it dates from the fifth century (or even earlier according to some) to the ninth century. This branch of study is neglected. The failure to appreciate its real significance specially the practical aspect renders our understanding of spiritual lore shallow. It is the scripture by which knowledge is spread. It is regarded as Sruti or Agama and is classed with the Vedas. Its function lies in combining the validity of the world as expression of Sakti with the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Siva. It uses new symbols, simplifies Vedic rituals. The complexity of the esotoric portion is given prominence in it. It develops a class of special literature connected with the rise of Saivism, Sankya and Yoga. It deals with rituals e, g, Homa, Abhisekha, Diksa, temple building, mode of worship etc. Its purpose is the attainment of salvation, the culmination of spiritual knowledge. There are numerous Tantras. Mahanirvana, Kularnava, Kulasara, Prapancasara, Tantrasara, Rudra. Yamal, Brahma Yama Vishnu yamal Todala Tantras Yogini, Pranatoshini. Meru, Kamala, Vir, Kali, Gotamiya Fetkarini are very famous among them. Besides these there are valuable compilations such as Tantra sara, Ananda kalpa, Saktananda Tarangini, Shyamarchana and others—all describing in glowing terms, the nature, the forms and glory of this cult. Its influence is very great in Kashmir, Bengal, Assam and Tibet. The yamalas play a very inportant role. They indicate a new orientation of this cult and constitute a more pronounced character of Saktaism. They help and perfect the co-ordination of activity, knowledge, devotion and yoga, systematise rituals and emphasise will and effort.

Tantra is famous for reverence for women, who are regarded as forms of the Divine Mother (Saptasati 11,5). There are 27 Agamas. These are divided into sub-Agamas. They teach practices leading to knowledge and liberation. There are 64 Kaulagamas teaching practices of the development of magical powers. Besides these there are eight misra Agamas. Bhaskaracharya quotes in his Lila sahasranama bhasya nine Sutras from Sakti Sutra.

Mother worship is a phase of Sakti cult. It has a very great importance from very ancient times. Savants hold that it is based upon Sankya philosophy. Sakti, the consort of Siva is described as Nature, Prakriti or Mula Prakriti as distinct from the Supreme Spirit. She is regarded as the Mother of the gods and is identified with Maya. She co-exists with the Supreme Spirit as His Sakti, His personal Energy. Purusha is inactive, omnipresent (Akhilanugata), pure consciousness (Prakasa), impersonal and is devoid of relativity. Siva is Cit. According to the *Soundarya Lahari* Siva when united with Sakti is able to create; otherwise he is unable to move. Sakti (Prakriti) is productive and is the universal material cause; Siva and Sakti are related as Prakasa and Vimarsa. Vimarsa or Sakti is described as power latent in the Absolute. Sakti is the formative energy of consciousness. She is Chidrupini. Both are indistinguishable. Siva is indeterminate Brahman, Sakti is determinate Brahman endowed with icca (will), jnana (knowledge), kriya (action), projecting the whole universe. Brahman or Siva and Sakti are different phases of the same Being. They are inseparable like fire from the power of burning.

The relation between Siva and Sakti is one of identity. One cannot be distinguished from the other. The former is the male principle and the other is the female principle. From a proper analysis it can be known they are neither male, nor female, nor neuter. The wisdom aspect of Reality is designated as the male principle and the votary of this aspect is called Saiva. The power aspect of Reality is designated as the female principle and its worshipper is called Sakta. The principle which guides the universe, according to some set code, constitutes four feet such as truth (Dharma), purity (Sauca), kindness (Daya) and charity (Dana). The worship of any one of this is the same as the worship of any other principle, as Siva and Sakti are inseparable.

Sakti, the power of Becoming, assumes the nature of being as both are identical with the same essence. Sakti is both gross and subtle. She is Mother of all beings. She is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the univese. The two extremes, the beginning and the end merge in Her. She is beyond both. Time cannot measure Her, space cannot limit Her and causality cannot reach Her. These three are mere windows through which one can rarely peep into the Infinite Abyss ; but to realise Her one has to tear the veil of the three.

Abhasa (illumination), Sakti (colouration), Vimarasana (examination), Dijabastana (the state of being in seed form), Vilapanata (lamentation) are attributed to Her.

In the supreme spirit one distinguishes three different aspects. (1) Absolute Brahman (2) the determinate subject endowed with Sakti and (3) Suddha Maya. Sakti is Prakriti, Maya. She is the substance of Devi (*Samya basta gunopadika Brahmarupini Devi*). Within Her womb is Maya, the matrix of the universe, potential in Pralaya (dissolution), and active in Sristi (creation), evolving under Sakti's direction. This Divine is Infinite, All pervading and All conscious. She is Chaitanyamayee. Creation, dissolution etc, are Her sport. She is Lilamayee. She has three distinct phases of Divine Energy e,g, Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. When She manifests herself through them She is Trigunamayee. Through the Satvic phase She appeares as the mind in various ways and poses as the subject of experience and action in each creature. She appears as material and vital energy (Prana) through the Rajasic phase, and as insentient matter through the Tamasic phase. She is the power of Becoming. Released as it were from the Eternal and Changelss Being, She expresses Herself through all names and forms which we call the world. She is Transcendent and Immanent and the innermost Being in all. It is by the touch of Her consciousness that beings act as the subject of action and experience. The universe comes out of Her, rests in Her and merges in Her ; but it does not cover Her entire Being.

According to this cult the Absolute is associated with the dynamic principle for the origination of the universe. It helps the aspirant to attain in a short time the object of his quest either material (wealth, longevity etc) or spiritual (power of evolving supreme consciousness or union with the Divinity even in this life). According to the Prapancasara there are five ways in which the teaching of this cult may be considered (1) Sthanu (gross), (2) Suksma (subtle), (3) Karana (casual), (4) Samanya (cosmic) and (5) Saksi (witness). Every one is not competent to consider things from these five different view points. The Pasu is confined to the gross. The Vira man fights the passion which obstructs the path of spiritual development. When the mind becomes pure and the intellect fine by the gradual puirficatory process one may attain the last stage and

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observe as the witnessing consciousness (Sakti). The man of perfect disposition is endowed with qualities which make him almost divine and always mindful of the five principles (tattwas).

There are thirty six tattwas instead of the twenty-five of the Sankyas. They are classified under (1) Siva tattwa, the Supreme, (2) Vidya tattwa, the subtle manifestation of Sakti and (3) Atma tattwa or material universe from maya down to the earth. According to this cult. Jiva (being) looks upon itself as independent agent and enjoyer till release. Knowledge of Sakti is the road to salvation which is identical with dissolution in the blissful effulgence of Brahman or Divine Mother. Jivan mukti (release from bondage in this life) is accepted. Liberation does not come from the recitation of hymns, sacrifice and the observance of a hundred fasts but by means of the knowledge that Jiva is Brahman. The *Mahanirvana Tantra* (xiv, 122) holds Brahma sadbhava is the highest ; Brahma bhava is the middle. The chanting of hymns and the repetition of the sacred name (mystic words) come next but external worship is the lowest. While giving importance to the aim of life which is liberation, the *Kularnava Tantra* says that it is not easily attained. It condemns laying too much stress on external paraphernalia. It adds, "If the rubbing of the body with mud and ashes gains liberation, the village dogs who roll in them have attained it." What is required is the fitness to be merged in the Effulgence.

Caste distinction is subordinated. The discipline of the Tantra is open to all. Bhakti is helpful to salvation. Freedom of worship is allowed. The mystic side of Yoga is emphasised. Mystic words are sacred. The system lays stress on the inherent power of sounds and the presence in the human body of threads of occult forces (nadi) and the six great centres of that force (cakra) described as so many lotuses one above the other. The belief in the mystic power of diagrams (yantra) and ritualistic gestures is emphasised. Special stress is laid on the awakening of the forces (cakra) within the organism. The kundalini is to be awakened and the other cakras are to be pierced to attain perfection (c/. Serpent Power, Arthur Avelon). The theories of karma, rebirth, gross and subtle bodies are accepted by Sakta thinkers. The speciality of the cult lies in its immensely practical aspect. It perfects the co-ordination of Karma, Yoga, jnana and bhakti, emphasises will and effort, yet gives vital place to self surrender, mercy and grace. The systematization of the rituals of karma with the inner purifying process of yoga, the purest monism with the purest devotion, and the most passionate yearning and love form the richest gift of the Sakti cult to humanity.

(15) **Conclusion : Harmony of Religion and science**

When we look at the trend of modern civilisation which boasts greatly of the development of physical science we find that it has occupied the foremost place in the realm of thought, whereas social science has become stagnanant ; and religious science has retreated. Though it has brought various inventions of high value and utility it splits into various sections and sets one against another. It splits knowledge into warring camps. Professor Einstein says that the malady of modern thought is due to science having outstripped ethies, philosophy and religion. Science is blind without religion and is lame without science. It can do wonders and save humanity when its disintegrated aspect becomes re-integrated, harmonised and unified with the development of social science and religious science for which much energy should be

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devoted. Accordig to him the world is in need of scientists who recognise mysticism as the source of true art and science, and also of religious leaders who with open eyes will face the results of science. What is needed is the eradication of scientific determinism and pessimism and finding out the root of man's position in the cosmos, in himself, a new philosophy of man, a vision of the Transcendance and the Immanence of God and the divinity of man. This is possible by the realisation of the conception of the Motherhood of God. This Mother is peace and peace is Mother.

This land of Mother worship has a message to the world for the regeneration of mankind. That is the message of spirituality, the message of peace through the propagation of this cult of motherhood. This is the prime need of the hour. Now let us conclude with a prayer to the Mother with folded hands. Salutation to the Goddess who exists as Mother, as peace in all beings. Salutation to Her. We bow down to Her again and again. "*Yadevi sarvabhuteshu matrirupena samsthitha, Namastasyai namastasyai namonamah. Yadevi sarvabhuteshu santirupena Samsthitha namastasyai namastasyai namonamah.*

Om santi, santi, santih,

Peace, peace, peace.

ERRATA

Page	Line	Read	In place of
2	8	C/o	Co/-
4	13	Dvitiyat	Dvtiyat
4	25	Supreme	Suprme
5	7	Brahmarupam	Brahmarupan
8	4	America—all	America-all
9	27	Jar	Jarof
11	10	Inside Asia	Inside India
11	17	built,	built)
23	15	son feels	sonf eels
26	1	maintained	maitained
27	7	difficulty	difficuty
27	17	to pass	to a pass
34	10	from	form
37	12	Aghories	Ahories
39	19	strenuous	strenous
45	15	forms	froms
49	21	Gradual	Grdual
51	4	Kindling	rindling
51	26	Commissions	Co-ommissions
52	14	Brahmabhuyaya	Brahmbhuyaya
55	20	tathah	thtah
57	25	Brahmn yamal	Brahma yama
62	2	Bijastana	Dijastana
65	23	religion is lame	is lame

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